Encounter

May 1975 50p

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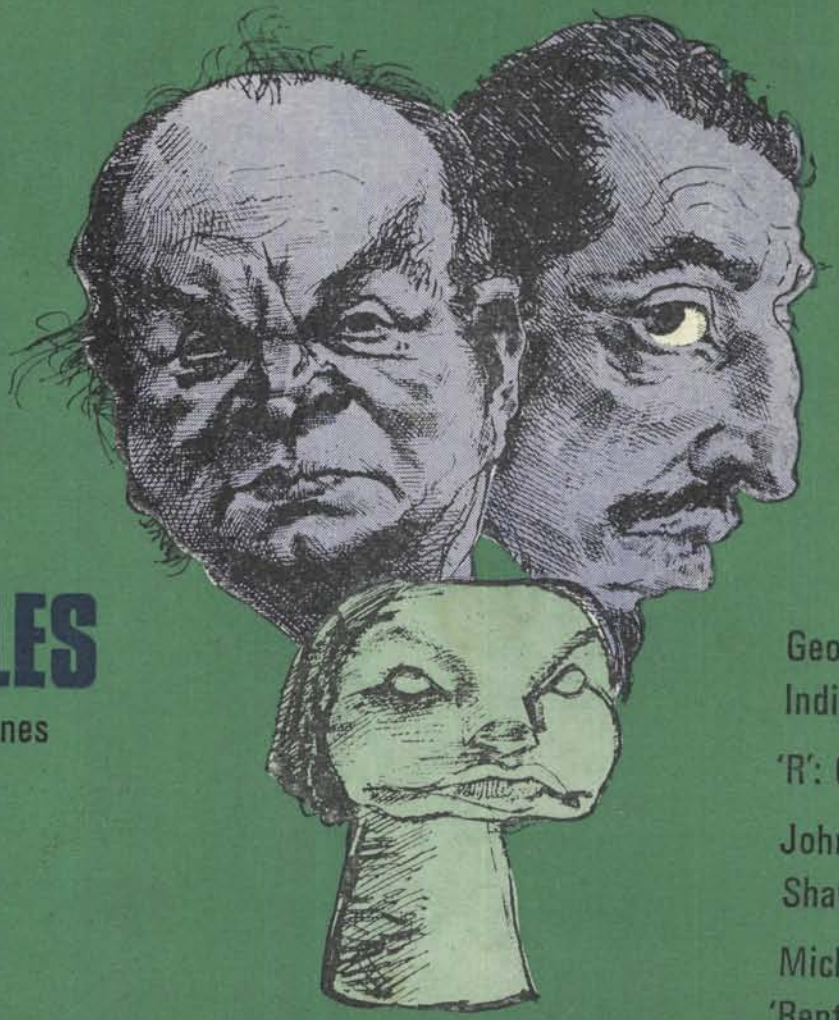

FEMALES

Hugh Lloyd-Jones

George Feaver: Indians

'R': Orwell

John Weightman: Shaw

Michael Wharton: 'Rentacrowd'

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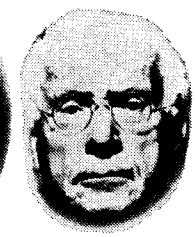

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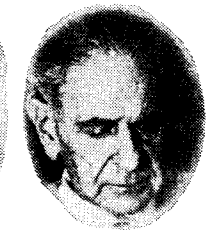

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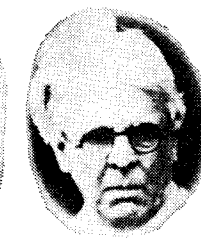

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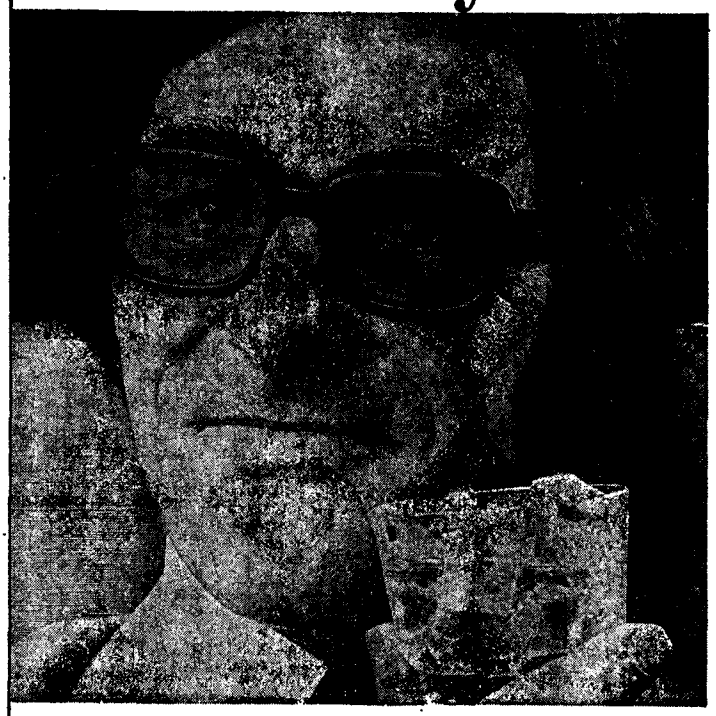

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Margaret Bhatty

Miss Das & the Population Explosion

MISS DAS was strict, but she was just. Terribly just. "If you break rules you must be prepared to suffer the consequences," she always said to erring pupils when she meted out punishment to them. Das's First Law of Causation some of the senior boys called this, applying it to more authentic situations than Miss Das in her unwed virginal state could appreciate.

"The whole universe and all of life functions on the principle of wheels within wheels," she told her classes in Health Science. "All life is subject to laws laid down by Mother Nature. If you wish to enjoy good health you must observe the laws of cleanliness and a balanced nutritious diet. If you break these laws the result is sickness, disease and even death."

In Geography she spoke of the laws governing the vital balance found in Nature. "Man has mistakenly thought of himself as being above Nature—master of Nature. So he has destroyed his forests, poisoned his seas, his air, his environment and overpopulated his earth. Now he is discovering to his dismay that Nature never forgives. Nature never forgets. And because he has shown no respect or regard for her laws, he faces a very real threat of extinction. . . ."

Indeed, it was obvious that all compounded stupidity, greed and avarice was exemplified by mankind (He)—whereas wisdom, in its totality was found only in Nature (She). But the impression gained by the more vulnerable young minds Miss Das taught was of a harsh, unforgiving female Mother deity who was infallible—not unlike Miss Das herself. And as implacable.

The students often wondered about Miss Priyo Das, watching her as she talked in her clipped affected Anglicised accent, drawing quick clever diagrams on the blackboard to illustrate a point. They studied the greying hair cut short and styled, the sober yet expensive saris she wore, each pleat exactly correct, the well-kept manicured hands that held the chalk and wrote a neat clear script.

She seemed so sure of herself, so well-armoured. They could not imagine her as once young, full of the same "frivolous laughter" she so deplored in them. Had she never been life-filled, laughter-filled, totally and irresponsibly immature? Was she never moved by moods or blown crazily here and there by every new wind? Why had she remained unmarried? Even in her late forties she was a handsome woman, fine-featured and with a surprisingly attractive smile.

However, the total impression was not prepossessing; in fact it was somewhat forbidding. The lines of her face were too sharply drawn. Her skin was dry, her flesh desiccated. They could not imagine her subject to any passion nor swept by sudden and uncontrolled emotion. She never seemed to lose hold of herself. Even her anger, though sometimes intense and frightening, was very exactly defined. It was always relevant and never extended beyond its own proper context. After she had dealt with her victims, she quickly returned to being herself again. It was the same with her laughter.

The school was a well-known English-medium day school in a suburb of Bombay, and Miss Das had been a part of it for almost twenty-five years now, having joined the staff when still a young woman of twenty-two. As Head Mistress she lived in a small bungalow behind the solid grey stone school buildings. The house was old-fashioned, quite unlike the high-rise apartment blocks that now surrounded the campus on all sides.

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It had deep verandahs, a sloping roof of red tiles, and rooms with high, raftered ceilings. Behind it was a small enclosed courtyard with a wall in which there was a servant's entrance.

Through this door, as cheerfully and as regularly as the sun every morning, came Tulsi to wait upon Miss Das, to wash, dust, scrub for her and prepare her meals. And she had done so for almost seven years. Tulsi did not belong to Bombay but came from a village in north India near the city of Allahabad. She spoke the broad expressive dialect of that part which Miss Das with some knowledge of Hindustani could just about understand.

Tulsi was in her twenties. She was dumpy with a round cheerful face, a snub nose and large brown bovine eyes. She was not very bright; but she was full of a vigorous earthy good-humour, singing snatches of film songs while she swept and sometimes twirling and taking small dancing steps as she dusted the furniture. She lived somewhere—Miss Das was never sure exactly where. All she knew was that it took Tulsi about fifteen minutes to walk the distance in order to appear at her back door at six every morning to start work. It had never been necessary for Miss Das to inquire whether Tulsi lived under tar-paper, cardboard, on the pavement or in an abandoned conduit pipe. What she did know was that Tulsi was clean, efficient and entirely honest. She could be trusted to work alone in the house while Miss Das was in her classes without so much as a pin being lifted. More than this Miss Das did not care to know.

Other pieces of information regarding Tulsi emerged almost accidentally. Her husband was a milk-man. He had two fine buffaloes and he sold milk to customers in the locality. Since Tulsi could not take his name, she referred to him as Himself. Although he was nameless and without identity except as Tulsi's husband, Miss Das was annoyed to find that the fellow constantly intruded on the smooth running of her house and often totally upset her plans: he kept Tulsi almost perpetually pregnant. During the years the woman had worked for Miss Das, she had borne four daughters and had almost twice that number of miscarriages.

"It is *Bhagvan*'s gift!" Tulsi said each time her condition became apparent.

Miss Das snorted with disgust. A gift from God indeed! "I know your *Bhagvan*!" said she with withering scorn—not for nothing was she a spinster—"Your *Bhagvan* keeps buffaloes and sells milk!"

"*Arey Ram! Ram! Ram!*" cried Tulsi, shocked at the blasphemy.

Tulsi's pregnancies caused her little trouble. She went through the nine months with great ease, never suffering any discomfort or queasiness. In fact she seemed to bloom, ballooning out steadily until she delivered as easily as a good cow might drop her calf. Within a day she was back at her job, her large breasts full and bursting. She kept her babies out of sight behind the courtyard door in charge of a toothless old crone distantly related to her, pausing only long enough in her work to slip out and nurse them.

BUT IT WAS TULSI'S miscarriages that upset Miss Das's carefully planned schedules. She bled profusely and dragged herself about the house, the music gone out of her. Miss Das was obliged to cut down her work and put her on a tonic.

"Four children you have had! Now get yourself operated!" Miss Das advised her. Hindi was not Miss Das's mother-tongue; but she managed well enough with a pidgin Hindustani typical of Bombay. "The government says only two children. It is written all over on buses, trains and stations."

"What can I do, Miss Sahib? It is Himself —he wants it every night!" Tulsi said without rancour.

All Miss Das's feminine gall rose at this terrible revelation. "You're not a child—don't let him!"

"O, Miss Sahib, how can you know about such things?"

This did not put off Miss Das in the least. "I'll take you to the clinic and have your tubes tied up", she promised.

However, inquiries at the Family Planning Centre revealed that Himself's signature or at least his thumb print would be needed before such an operation could be performed. Besides, Tulsi herself would not hear of it. She confessed, somewhat reluctantly, that she had heard it often took away a husband's manhood.

"Ha! That might be the best thing that ever happened to him", Miss Das snorted in English.

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"Madam, you must bring the husband," said the Social Worker in a tired voice. "We find that nothing can be achieved unless the husband cooperates."

"Could you—er—fit her with some kind of —device?" Miss Das asked uncertainly, now getting somewhat out of her depth.

The woman shook her head and Tulsi balked at the suggestion. She had heard it caused internal bleeding. Besides all her children were mere girls. "Four girls!" she pointed out. "*Four*!"

Miss Das did not think this such a calamity. She waved her arm to indicate the women sitting in patient rows on the benches in the hospital waiting-room.

"We are all girls, too!" she cried indignantly on behalf of her sex.

They returned from the clinic without anything achieved. But Miss Das resolved to pursue the matter to the end. Too many laws of Nature were being broken; no good would come of it. In principle, such an unbridled sexual appetite as that exhibited by the milkman *must* be a threat to the ecological balance in Nature. It was certainly putting Miss Das herself to great inconvenience.

"You should sleep separately in another room. Bolt the door against him", she suggested to Tulsi.

Tulsi laughed in disbelief. What room? What bolt? There was only one room in their shack, she explained. In area it was a little smaller than the kitchen in which she did Miss Das's cooking. In this lived Himself, Tulsi, their four girls, and also Himself's younger brother, his wife and two children. There was one bed on which Himself slept. The others slept on the mud floor with enough space under the bed for all the children to fit in easily.

Miss Das listened with horror. She counted personal privacy as one of the most essential requirements of a truly civilised person. And the thought of all the physical activity that went on in the dark in that single room within hearing of the children made her shudder. She might lack experience, but she had a fairly competent imagination which stood her in good stead as Head Mistress of a co-educational school.

"You tell this husband of yours that I, Miss Das, wish to speak to him!" she said, "I'll settle him!"

She would deal with this prodigious performer, she vowed, thinking he would be thin and scrawny with a sickly fevered lust and an immensely inflated male ego. She had met such types even in better classes of society.

However, the man disregarded her imperious summons. Despite repeated messages he did not come. Now Miss Das was not used to being disobeyed and she felt a growing dislike for the fellow.

For some time the problem remained unresolved for Miss Das was now busy with examinations at the end of the academic year. Tulsi was pregnant again; but this time she did not abort. This time it was different. This time she had a son. Himself was overjoyed and distributed sweets all round. He even sent a small box for Miss Das. However, Miss Das never broke any of Mother Nature's rules regarding wholesome clean food. She never ate anything from the bazaar, so she passed the sweets on to the gardener's children who knew nothing about rules.

The baby—called Munna or Little Fellow —was puny but perfectly formed. Tulsi often brought him in from the back door to show him off to Miss Das. There was not a flaw in Munna. From top to toe he was unmarked and without blemish. There never had been such a child. At less than two months Tulsi reported that he was trying to turn over. By four months he was lifting his bottom and trying to raise himself on all fours before flopping back on to his stomach. Before he was six months he had begun to crawl. He had large dark eyes which twinkled with secret laughter. Despite herself, Miss Das found him a very attractive child.

The school closed for the summer; but she did not go up to Matheran in the Western Ghats. Instead she read books on baby and child-care and constantly advised Tulsi about the boy. She even let Munna come into the courtyard and allowed him to crawl all through her rooms.

THEN TULSI FOUND she was pregnant again. She could not continue to nurse the baby, she explained, because her milk would poison him. But the milk from his father's buffaloes proved too strong for Munna's stomach. He became ill, lost weight and forgot to smile. Miss Das was worried.

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She went out and bought a large tin of baby food, and a feeding bottle along with a saucepan in which Tulsi was to boil it thoroughly each time. No rules were to be broken. She also resolved that this time she would deal with the wretched lecherous milk-man.

"Bring him here!" she commanded. "Tell him that if he doesn't come, I'm going to report him to the authorities—" she bluffed.

To her surprise he obeyed. He came, not by the back door, but through the front gate of the school, striding across the playing field to her bungalow. He stood in her verandah scraping his new patent leather shoes on the stone flags. Miss Das came out and saw him.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"I am my father's son," he drawled in dialect. "I am Bhola!"

Hearing his voice, Tulsi appeared in the door. "It is Himself! It is the Father of Munna!" she giggled. Then overcome with sudden laughter, she disappeared.

HE WAS STRONG AND well-built with thick black handlebar moustaches which he kept twirling. He wore a snow-white dhoti and a string vest through which his muscles could be seen. He was scrubbed and clean, his skin glowing as though his body had been massaged with the best butter off the top of his milk cans. When he grinned his teeth were gleaming and even. He exuded a coarse animal vitality and his eyes were jet and full of laughter—like his son's.

He followed Miss Das into the sitting-room where she sat down in a straight-backed chair. As he stood before her he appeared neither contrite nor embarrassed. In fact he assumed a somewhat patronising attitude and this put her on the defensive. She had often had to deal with the fathers of some of her pupils who naturally assumed that since she was female she must be backward. "Male chauvinists" she called them.

The interview began on the wrong note. She had waited long for this confrontation, seeing herself as a lone crusader fighting for the rights of an under-privileged sister who was victim of a male-oriented social system.

She had intended to be persuasive and reasonable; instead she became annoyed—and Tulsi was responsible.

"How long can this poor woman's system stand up to this kind of treatment?" she demanded. "She will not last! She will get finished off!" She did not use the word "death" though she implied it.

"What is there?" he drawled in dialect. "I shall bring me another." There was a snort of laughter from Tulsi behind a door. Bhola heard it and smiled as though it was some small private joke they shared. This made Miss Das angry with Tulsi. She began to feel that it was not the man but she herself who was the odd one out.

"Do you think a woman is like a cooking-pot to be replaced when it is broken?" she cried with great heat, striking a blow for Indian women in general.

Bhola did not answer but studied her curiously. There were two things about Miss Das which intrigued him and about which he had speculated much. One was her unmarried condition and the other her great preoccupation and concern with his sex life. He had drawn his own conclusions and they made him smile inwardly.

Miss Das saw the expression on his face. "Silent contempt", she called it in her pupils. She always punished it severely.

"Why don't you agree to have Tulsi sterilised?" she asked.

"If all husbands allowed it all wives would become free!" he replied, using the word *azad* which Miss Das understood well enough. He spoke only in dialect, though she was sure he knew Hindustani. She suspected, too, that he was intentionally drawing out his vowels.

"Why do we have all these shortages—these famines?" she asked, trying to be patient.

"The government causes them," he replied in a tone which implied that he would hardly expect a woman to understand that much.

"It is because there are too many people," she said. "Too many babies! Too many mouths to feed! In our country a baby is born every minute!" She thought she had the average right. Bhola looked mildly incredulous.

"You have four girls," Miss Das went on holding up four fingers. "Four girls and one son. That makes five. When they marry even if each has two children, how many will that make?"

He shrugged. "Miss Sahib, I'm not asking you to feed and clothe and marry off my

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children. I am not spreading my hands before anyone! Why should you worry so far ahead about my children?"

"But don't you understand? Don't you see?" She wanted to explain to him about the menace of exponential growth by which five became ten, ten became twenty, and so on. "Within thirty years our country's population is going to double itself!" she cried.

The prospect did not seem to frighten him. He nodded as though encouraging her to proceed. He was prepared to humour her by hearing her out.

In thirty years, she wanted to say, six hundred million would become one billion two hundred million. But she was not sure of the numbers in Hindustani, and even if she were, she doubted if they would mean anything to this illiterate peasant. "In every place where you see one Indian today there will be two! For every one mouth to feed there will be two!"

She saw his attention had begun to wander. He was glancing around the room.

She thought she might reach him by simple example. Water hyacinth! That was it! He was from the districts, he must know the plant. Did he? Bhola frowned thoughtfully. He was not sure.

"It grows all over in ponds and tanks," Miss Das explained. "It has a purple flower. Well, this plant doubles itself. Two produce four. Four produce eight. There comes a time when half the pond is full and in the final doubling the whole pond is choked and it dies. The plant kills the pond!"

She paused dramatically letting it sink in. Bhola blinked and marvelled. How could a plant *kill* a pond? What was the woman talking about?

"In the same way if we humans keep doubling and doubling our numbers there must come a time when there will be no room for all of us on this planet. The earth will die and with it all of us—all of mankind will die!" she cried as if she fully expected to be there when it happened.

SHE WAS MAKING MUCH BETTER headway now, but she had begun to use a lot of English words and she could see he was not following her.

Bhola stared at her high colour and the way in which her eyes flashed as she waved her arms about.

If only she had blackboard and chalk to demonstrate her point, Miss Das was thinking. If only she could explain to the fellow that when the world became totally populated, totally covered, it would be too late. For Mother Nature never forgot. She never forgave. And because men like him could not curb their lust, all mankind, overcome by a sudden suicidal madness, would then rush lemming-like into the oceans and perish. The whole human race would come to an end. And she, Miss Das, with it.

There was a long pause while she tried to gain control of herself. "Tulsi has had enough children. Her blood is thin—like water. She must not have any more!" she stated flatly.

"Women should not concern themselves with matters that concern only men," Bhola said as if he were addressing a somewhat dim-witted and backward female child. At this Miss Das lost her temper.

"Then you must have an operation!" she fumed, breathing hard. She was sure she knew the Hindustani term for vasectomy; but now it went clean from her mind. "You must have it cut! Cut!"

Perhaps there was something in the matter in which she said "Cut!" that offended him. Her hostility was now out in the open. "Have it cut! *Katao!*" she cried furiously as if nothing short of total castration would satisfy her. "*Katao!*" As if she would be content only when she saw him rendered eunuch. His masculine pride was touched. His moustaches bristled and his eyes flashed angrily.

"Mother of Munna?" he said loudly.

Tulsi appeared from behind the door. "Why do you shout then?" she asked.

"Silence! Where's the boy? Bring him! I will not let you work for this—*raakshasnin!* This she-devil!"

Tulsi began to protest; but he would not hear her. He took them away through the back door, slamming it hard as he went.

The next day Tulsi did not report for work. Miss Das was left without a servant and the problem of the population explosion still unsolved.

For the next six months she was put to

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much inconvenience. Servants came and went. She found them all slovenly, dirty and dishonest. There were times when she did her own washing and scrubbing and spoilt her hands. Then early one morning when she opened the back door in response to a knock, she found Tulsi standing there.

From the woman's pallor and her tragic look Miss Das was sure she must have aborted recently. Tulsi stumbled into the courtyard and sitting on the ground began keening in a high-pitched voice.

"He beat you?" Miss Das asked. She shook her head and sobbed.

It was some time before Miss Das could make anything of what she said. Munna was dead. He had died shortly after she left Miss Das's employ.

"What happened?"

"He had fever and a very bad stomach upset for many days with green diarrhoea. He went very suddenly", Tulsi replied.

Miss Das said nothing. Of course they had been careless about his feeding.

"Himself was very sad, so we all went back to the village. There was *maata* in the district and two of our girls—they also went."

Each summer, on Miss Das's insistence, the girls had been vaccinated against smallpox. "Didn't you have them done this year?"

"Himself said it was not necessary every year—"

Miss Das looked grim. She was sorry—very sorry. But she was not surprised. Rules had been broken; consequences had followed.

Tulsi wanted to return to her old job. "I'm not pregnant now", she added quickly as though this might disqualify her.

The number of children left in the milkman's family was now down to the two suggested by government posters. Undoubtedly it would not remain at two since those left were mere girls; but for the time being Miss Das was prepared to call a truce. She took Tulsi back.

"I hear your servant-woman has returned," the Principal remarked to Miss Das the next day when she entered the school office to collect her mail.

"Yes, and what a relief! It's impossible to get a good servant nowadays", Miss Das replied. "Her husband's a beast; but she's such a fine worker! She lost her son, you know. And two of her daughters also!" She said it with a kind of satisfaction. "What a blessing it is to know that Nature has her own way of working out averages and trying somehow to restore some kind of balance. It's frightening to think that it is this class of people who could so easily breed all the rest of us into extinction!"

Silhouette

Men, who when we look keep still,
Or images made by men: such would be
Dangerous, would have designs upon us.

From here the stones are shape only,
Blocking their small outline of sky,
Too far to move, or seem to move.

Hat in hand, a wave from the shoulder,
A shift of plane, colour catching the light,
Fanning of sheep or delay of shot:

There are no signs like these to tell us
What it might be, high up on the mountain.
And we shall not be climbing there just now.

John Fuller

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L. P. Elwell-Sutton

Sufism & Pseudo-Sufism

"THERE ARE TO BE FOUND in our days many who parade themselves as Sufis, and set themselves the task of answering all sorts of questions and enquiries regarding Sufism. Every one of these impostors claims to have written a book or two on Sufism which in reality he has filled with nothing but rubbish and nonsense in answer to equally meaningless and silly queries. Such impostors do not realise that it is not merely undesirable but a positive evil to do all this. . . ."

These words were written, not in 1975 by a troubled observer of the neo-mystical scene, but by the 10th-century Arab Sufi al-Sarraj. Even in the days of its youth, Sufism was already attracting to itself a lunatic fringe of charlatans and impostors, just as it continues to do in its declining old age. Is there something in the teaching itself that lays it open to this sort of corruption? Or is it that at certain periods the social and political environment makes people more ready to embrace esoteric teachings regardless of whether they can understand them or not?

The medieval Islamic world would seem to be utterly remote from the mid-20th-century West. Still, it could be argued that in both men were being driven to turn their backs on the material world through a sense of impotence and frustration in the face of forces and movements that controlled and determined human activities, yet seemed themselves beyond human control. In the medieval Middle East there was the constant successions of invasions and conquests, the abrupt rise and fall of dynasties, arbitrary and capricious rule, and the general insecurity of life and property. Today we are faced with growing concentration of power, the breakdown of parliamentary democracy, arbitrary government by bureaucracy, the exclusion of individuals from the decision-making process. Everywhere, then as now, there was reluctance to plan ahead, unwillingness to sacrifice the present for the future, preference for immediate over long-term gain.

It was, therefore, natural in medieval Islam that men should turn to the search for the permanent and unchanging verities—and let it be said immediately that that is what Sufism was (and is) about. Sufism is a deeply-rooted product of Islam, the last of the great monotheistic faiths, whose insistence on the uniqueness and absolute power of God provided a natural starting-point for those who believed that the only right course for the human soul was to seek its way back to the Divine Source from which it had sprung: "Verily we are from God, and to Him we return" (*Qur'an* XX 156). The Sufi believes that the material world is an insubstantial veil concealing the real world of God and His angels, a world that is hidden from most men but that can be seen and experienced by one who genuinely seeks to enter it and prepares and trains himself in the right way.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUFI thinking and practice from the first seeds sown by the *Qur'an* was a long and often painful process. The earliest Sufis of the 7th and 8th centuries were ascetics pure and simple, clothed in garments of coarse wool (*suf*), withdrawn from the world and living alone or in small communities. The urge towards self-purification began as a reaction against materialism in high places and the social disorder of the day. It was characterised by a strong consciousness of sin and dread of Divine retribution.

> He who is content [said Hasan al-Basri (643–728)] needing nothing, and who has sought solitude, apart from mankind, will find peace; he who has trodden his carnal desires underfoot, will find freedom; he who has rid himself of envy will find friendship, and he who has patience for a little while will find himself prepared for eternity.

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The idea that it was possible to know God directly was alien to orthodox Islam, which held that communion was only possible between like and like. Nevertheless, the constant practice of abstinence and contemplation of the nature of God brought to these Sufis the personal experience of penetrating the veil of matter and glimpsing the world beyond.

Soon what was originally a by-product of the ascetic life became the central feature of the Sufi way. Already by the 9th century A.D. the direction of Sufism was changing, laying emphasis on the omnipresence rather than the remoteness of God, the possibility of man attaining knowledge of the Real, and the overwhelming love of God for man that must be reciprocated to the point where it excludes every other object of affection, including one's self. Doctrinal support for these beliefs was found in the *Qur'an*, notably in the verse (VII 171) describing God's pre-creation covenant with man, whereby man recognised God as his Lord and bound himself ultimately to return to Him. Another much-quoted tradition attributed these words to God:

> I was a hidden treasure, and I wanted to be known; therefore I created man that I might be known.

IDRIES SHAH

DURING THE 10TH and 11th centuries Sufism began to receive support from some of those whose pursuit of rationalist and scientific enquiry (discouraged in any case by both theocratic and secular authority) had led them to awareness of the vast unexplored areas of knowledge beyond the reach of the human mind. While many (like Omar Khayyam) took refuge in pessimistic agnosticism, others found security in Sufism's rejection of knowledge achieved by mere reason. As Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri (796–861) wrote:

> The gnostics see without knowledge, without sight, without information received, and without observation, without description, without veiling, and without veil. They are not themselves, but in so far as they exist at all, they exist in God.

But Sufism itself attracted, and was fashioned by more than one type of outlook. In the western regions of Islam the process of self-purification continued to be linked with piety, sobriety, and strict observance of the Islamic law. In the east (perhaps under the influence of Hindu and Buddhist thought) more extreme views prevailed, calling for total rejection of the transient world, including even its laws and moral codes. Man, being nothing in comparison with God, can only return to Him through complete severance from earthly things, and even (like the Malamatiya, the "blameworthy" ones) deliberately seeking to gain public condemnation.

Orthodox hostility towards these groups stemmed as much from their refusal to conform as from their apparently blasphemous claims of near-identity with God. Abu Yazid Bistami (d. 874) was the first of these "intoxicated" Sufis:

> Then I began to melt away, as lead melts in the heat of the fire. Then he gave me to drink from the fountain of Grace in the cup of fellowship and changed me into a state beyond description and brought me near unto Him. . . . I continued thus until I became even as the souls of men had been, in that state before existence was and God abode in solitude apart.

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Husain b. Mansur al-Hallaj was martyred in 922 for his ecstatic utterance:

> If ye do not recognise God, at least recognise his signs. I am that sign, I am the Truth, because through that Truth I am a truth eternally.

Somewhat later in time, but still heirs to this phase of Sufi development, were the great mystical poets of Iran. The permeation of so much of Persian literature by the catch-phrases of Sufism, and conversely the use by Sufis of the stock imagery of love- and wine-poetry, has led some students of the subject to state categorically that all Persian poets were Sufis. Thus Idries Shah in *The Way of the Sufi* (p. 32): "Almost all the literature of Persia in the classical period is Sufic." This was very far from being the case. The authentic Sufi poetry has to be recognised, not by its language or symbolism, but by its fundamental characteristics of self-denial, rejection of the world and its temptations, abandonment of self-love for love of God, yearning for union with and annihilation in God.

Baba Taher (d. 1010):

Homeless as I am, to whom shall I apply?
A houseless wanderer, whither shall I go?
Turned from all doors, I come at last to Thee,
If Thy door is denied, where shall I turn?
(translated by Edward Heron-Allen)

Abu'l-Majdud Sana'i (d. 1141):

> Love knows that renunciation is the key of the gate: in the crucible of renunciation the lover is prepared to consume all that keeps him from the Beloved. . . . When He admits you to His court, ask from Him nothing but Himself. When your Lord has chosen you as His lover, your eye has seen all things: the world of Love allows of no duality—what talk is this of 'me' and 'you'? When you come forth from life and your dwelling-place, then through God you will see God.
> *(translated by Margaret Smith)*

Jalaloddin Rumi (1207–1273):

Up, O ye lovers, and away! 'Tis time to leave the world for aye.
Hark, loud and clear from Heaven the drum of parting calls—let none delay! . . .

From this orb, wheeling round its pole, a wondrous slumber o'er thee stole:
O weary life that weighest naught, O sleep that on my soul dost weigh!
O heart, towards thy heart's love wend, and O friend, fly towards the Friend,
Be wakeful, watchman, to the end; drowse seemingly no watchman may.
(translated by R. A. Nicholson)

Shamsoddin Mohammad Hafez (d. 1389):

For years our heart has been seeking Jamshid's glass of us,
Begging from strangers what it already owned;
Seeking from lost men on the sea-shore
The pearl that is outside the confines of place and being. . . .
This forlorn man—God is with him at every turn, but he has not seen Him and, as from afar, cries: My God, my God!
That dear Comrade, said he, on whose account even the gibbet raised its head,
His crime consisted in manifesting secret things.
If the grace of the Holy Spirit vouchsafe help again.
Others too may do what the Christ did.
I said to him: What means the chain of the tresses of fair idols?
He replied: Hafez is complaining of the length of Christmas night!
(translated by Cyprian Rice)

SO FAR Sufism had been primarily a personal search, perhaps under the guidance of others more experienced and advanced along the way. But by now the theoreticians were getting to work. The path to be followed by the seeker was mapped and detailed. The stages to be achieved by personal effort and the states conferred on the worthy by Divine gift were categorised. Concurrently, the esoteric aspects of the doctrine were developed. Some men, it was held, were especially chosen by God, endowed by Him with *ma'rifa* (gnosis) and *wilaya* (sainthood—in the mystical, not the moral, sense). Soon arrived the concept of a hierarchy of saints—at first dwellers in the supernatural world, but later extended to include humans. The term pole or axis (*qutb*), originally applied to the earthly manifestation of God in each era, later widened to include almost any holy man. The decline of Sufism had begun.

In spite of the appearance of major figures like Suhrawardi, promulgator of the doctrine of illuminism, the theosophy of light—and of Ibn Arabi who taught the concept of the "unity of existing things", the pre-existence of all things as ideas in the knowledge of God, whence they emanate and whither they ultimately return—the most significant developments in Sufism from the 13th century onwards were in the direction of institutionalisation and ritualisation. The Sufi path could only be followed within the confines of an Order and under the guidance of a qualified teacher recognised in his turn by his superiors.

In this way transmitted knowledge and mechanical observances took the place of personal experience. The achievement of *wajd* (ecstasy) ceased to be no more than a means to gnosis, and became an end in itself. Even more unfortunate was the encouragement given to the cult of personality. The *shaikh* of the sub-order (and even the individual teacher) became the object of veneration, while God, once the immediate and only object of the search, slipped

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away into a more remote, inacessible elysium. While there continued—and continue—to be genuine Sufis who understood the full implications of the Sufi way of life, as well as scholars both Eastern and Western who studied its writings in depth, popular Sufism tended to deteriorate into a de-spiritualised accumulation of ritual, superstition, and folklore, often in the hands of itinerant dervishes playing on the credulity of the simple-minded.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that it is precisely these decadent and negative aspects of Sufism that have gained most currency in the West, since pseudo-Sufis have scrambled on to the band-wagon of "Oriental" mysticism set rolling by the Zen Buddhists in the 1950s. Most of these movements, whether they claim the Far East, India, the Middle East, or Central Asia as their source, have certain things in common. They appeal to the psychological weaknesses of bewildered individuals in a puzzling world. They exploit the popular view of the East as mysterious and perhaps therefore wiser than ourselves. So Gurdjieff's "Seekers of the Truth", we are told, penetrated during their search for esoteric knowledge into little known parts of Persia, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Tibet, the borders of India, China, Egypt, and the Indonesian Archipelago.

They demand whole-hearted and uncritical acceptance from their adherents, and discourage informed enquiry and expert assessment. So Rafael Lefort, in his book *The Teachers of Gurdjieff* (1966), assures us that he was told:

> "You can become a pupil. You can follow the path. You will be under the absolute tutelage of those charged with the direction of this time-phase of the tradition . . . Question nothing, obey all . . . Return to Europe, to a place where I will send you. Speak to no one as to where it is or whom you see there."

Idries Shah, in *The Way of the Sufi* (1968), quotes one Rais Tchaqmaqzade in the following exchange:

> "*Question 14:* But collecting information about Sufis and their teachings cannot but be a good enterprise, leading to knowledge?
> *Answer:* This is a question of Lesser Understanding. Information about the activities of one body of Sufis may be harmful to the potential of another."

Finally, the pseudo-mystical movements call for veneration of the personality of a Master. This last facet leads us to consideration of the movement currently run by Idries Shah, and particularly the part played in its acceptance by the development of a personality cult.

IDRIES SHAH himself from time to time disclaims any desire to be treated as a "guru", but it is difficult on the facts to absolve him of all awareness of the campaign vigorously carried on by his adherents.

There is all too much evidence of a well-planned build-up, beginning in the early 1960s with discreetly worded articles (for instance, by William Foster in *The Contemporary Review* for May 1960) singling out for special sanctity and a special role in the world an obscure Afghan clan from whom, as it happens, Idries Shah is descended. There followed hints of the establishment of a centre of Sufi teaching somewhere in Europe (Rafael Lefort, quoted above; Idries Shah: "There is a conscious, efficient and deliberate source of legitimate Sufic teaching actually in operation in the West"). In the end these different strands were brought together to identify Idries Shah, by now known as a prolific writer, as the Master to whom the world must turn. By way of example—on a somewhat trivial level—may I cite the "International Week of the Sufi Book" held in Buenos Aires in 1972, at which six out of the 29 prizes were awarded to books by Idries Shah and another nine to books and articles about him, and six to books by his associates or published by his private press.

Recently two books have appeared that both illustrate and epitomise this process. In 1972 the "Institute for Research on the Dissemination of Human Knowledge" of Boulder, Colorado, published *The Diffusion of Sufi Ideas in the West*, more accurately subtitled "An Anthology of New Writings by and about Idries Shah" and packed with prime examples of the adman's breathless prose. The following year there appeared, this time from E. P. Dutton of New York, *Sufi Studies: East and West*, "a symposium in honour of Idries Shah's services to Sufi studies", edited by octogenarian former Indian Civil Servant L. F. Rushbrook Williams.[1] A rapid browse through these works yields a rich harvest, running the gamut of eulogy from straight praise ("inspiring and thought-provoking", "a remarkable contribution to knowledge", "a major

[1] For several years this book had been promised from one of our leading British publishers, but in fact it is still available in this country only from Idries Shah's private press.

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interpreter of traditional knowledge", "a maker of the modern mind") through adulation ("his heart-enrapturing work", "he excels in elevating the inner perceptions", "a glowing star rising against the evening dusk to light the world with the wisdom of a brilliant mind") to whole-hearted veneration ("the Guide, the Teacher, the Exemplar, the figure central to Sufism", "some people claim that meeting him has altered the entire trend of their lives", "there is evidence that some mysterious element is in operation"). The venerable Hindu monk Dr Bankey Behari exclaims:

> "Idries Shah: you have provoked in me the desire to place before you a dish I have prepared; by offering it to you I expect thereby to secure your blessings, to bring me close to the lotus feet of my Lord and bestow on me a place in the eternal Divine Abode."

Martin Brackett claims to have witnessed a ceremony in Turkey held to ratify the election of Idries Shah as "our High Guide, the Magnetic Pole of the Age, the Grand Sheikh of the Naqshbandi and Qadiri rites, the Shah." No fewer than fifteen venerable figures, he tells us, uttered this formula: "I, Master of the . . . Order, do hereby accept this man as my Master and Supreme Guide." Several writers have had the impertinence to couple Idries Shah's name with such great classical figures as Ghazali, Rumi, Attar, Hallaj, Ibn Arabi. (Indeed the second of these two "Festschrifts" is actually described as "marking the 700th anniversary of the death of Jalaluddin Rumi"!).

NOT THAT Idries Shah is an austere and remote guardian of a secret doctrine. Books flow from his pen unceasingly. They fall mainly into two categories: amateurish compendia culled from anthologies, oriental classics, and the shelves of the public libraries (*The Sufis*, *Oriental Magic*, *The Way of the Sufi* may be cited as examples of this genre), and collections of "oriental" anecdotes written in a heavy Anglo-Indian style with a discreetly added pseudo-Sufi flavour (*Tales of the Dervishes*, *Caravan of Dreams*, *Wisdom of the Idiots*, etc.). The mixture is spiced with a seasoning of paradoxes, hints of secret knowledge, amateur psychology, "linguistic judo" (his brother's phrase), numerology, and plain mumbo-jumbo. When one has disinterred the content from the verbiage, one is left with a collection of platitudes and well-worn popular apophthegms, admirable in themselves but scarcely meriting the awe and veneration with which they have been received in certain circles.

On the evidence of his writings, Idries Shah can claim no more knowledge of the plain facts of Islamic history, religion, literature, and philosophy than might be acquired by the use of any standard, non-specialist reference works—and only such works. Indeed, he appears at times to have treated even these sources somewhat cavalierly. One of his most misleading practices is indiscriminately to label every Islamic poet, personality, religious movement, as "*Sufi*", a habit that leads him, for instance, to describe Omar Khayyam, the Yazidis, and the Isma'ilis all by the same term. This is bad enough. But it really will not do, even in the interests of respectability, to derive the familiar European name for the last group, the Assassins, not from *Hashshashin*, "users of *hashish*", but from *Asasin* (properly *Asasiyin*), "people of the Foundation, the Fundamentals", a term for the use of which there is not a scrap of evidence. As a random sample of characteristic inaccuracies the following may be offered (all from *The Way of the Sufi*):

> p. 48: "Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* was retranslated. . . ." The *Rubaiyat* are a collection of individual quatrains, not a single poem.
> p. 99: The "Parliament of Birds" was by Attar, not Sana'i.
> p. 102: The *Manaqib al-Arifin* (not *Munaqib*) was by Aflaqi, not Rumi.
> p. 135: Suhrawardi's name was Shihabuddin Umar, not the garbled and impossible Ziaudin Jahib.
> p. 166: Ibrahim's father was Adham, a name that has nothing to do with Adam.

As for Idries Shah's translations from Persian, they are frequently unreliable. A couple of examples will suffice. On page 60 a line from Omar Khayyam which should read

> *What they have said is only wind, O Cupbearer.*

is rendered

> *What they have only said is in our hands,*
> *O Cupbearer.*

because he has misread *bad ast* (it is wind) as *ba dast* (with the hand). On page 92 he translates a verse by Sa'di as follows:

> "If a poor man brings you a gift of yoghurt, he will have bought it at such a price that it will be two parts water to one of real yoghurt."

In fact it should read

> "If a stranger sets yoghurt before you, it will be two cups of water and a spoonful of buttermilk."

The poet is reflecting on the meanness of strangers, not on the hardships of poverty.

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Equally inaccurate, but perhaps less attributable to ignorance, is his habit of substituting the word "Sufi" throughout for such designations as "a poor man", "a beggar", "a pious man."

MUCH IS MADE OF THE FACT that Idries Shah is a Hashemi Sayyid, and it is worth while looking a little more closely at this claim to assess just what it amounts to. The term "*Sayyid*" is applied to descendants (real and imaginary) of the Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law Ali and their son Husain. As this couple were married in the early part of the 7th century A.D., it is scarcely surprising that their posterity at the present time should run into seven figures. Sayyids proliferate throughout the Islamic world, in all walks of society and on both sides of every religious and political fence. Robert Graves, in an attempt to upgrade this rather undistinguished lineage, claimed that Idries Shah was "in the senior male line of descent from the Prophet"—a rather unfortunate gaffe, since all the three sons of the Prophet died in infancy. Rushbrook Williams, having another try, calls him "a descendant of the last of the Sasanian kings", again a distinction that all Sayyids can claim if the legend is accepted as true that Husain married the daughter of Yezdegerd III.

The facts are that Idries Shah is the son of the late Iqbal Ali Shah, a one-time unsuccessful medical student at Edinburgh University who turned world-traveller and publicist to a number of Asian countries and personalities. The family is descended from a clan of Musavi Sayyids in the small Afghan resort of Paghman, 50 miles west of Kabul. Idries Shah's great-great-grandfather was (in 1840) awarded the title of Jan Fishan Khan for supporting the British-sponsored puppet Shah Shuja, and in 1841 expelled from Afghanistan for the same activity when the British army was disastrously defeated at the end of the First Afghan War. The Indian Government compensated him with a modest estate at Sardhana, near Delhi, where relatives of the family still live. The designation "Musavi" indicates descent from Musa Kazem, great-great-grandson of Husain and Seventh Imam of the Twelver Shi'a sect of Islam. (Characteristically, Rushbrook Williams conflates this man's name with that of his son Ali Reza, and produces a non-existent hybrid "Ali Musa Raza.") But the real point is that even that phase of Sufism that places transmitted knowledge above personal experience does not consider that such knowledge is passed on through physical heredity. To be a Sayyid confers neither sanctity nor authority.

LUCK HAS CERTAINLY PLAYED a part in Idries Shah's rise to fame. He is heir to a movement started some sixty years ago by Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, two Russian eccentrics who met in Moscow in 1915 and decided that they had a message to give to the world. The former, born in the Caucasus in 1872, claimed to have spent the earlier part of his life travelling throughout Asia, and to have acquired esoteric knowledge from dervishes, holy men, and members of ancient brotherhoods. After the Russian Revolution he moved to France, where he dispensed these teachings for the benefit of a community founded at Fontainebleau, and later enshrined them in a series of books—*All and Everything*, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, *Views from the Real World.* He died in 1949.

Ouspensky undertook the propagation of his teachings in Britain, and founded a community which settled down in 1936 at a large country estate, Coombe Springs, in the "stockbroker-belt" west of London. He summed up his view of the teachings of Gurdjieff (with whom he had broken in 1932) in *In Search of the Miraculous*, published after his death in 1946. It would be impossible to summarise the ideas taught by these two men, which, though dignified with the name of the "System", were in fact a strange jumble of ill-digested scraps garnered from popular lore, modern psychology, and a variety of oriental creeds and religions, from which one can at least gather that man needs to wake up and discover his real self.

In 1946 the forlorn remnants of this group, directed by J. G. Bennett, formed the "Institute for the Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences", still based on Coombe Springs. In 1963 (according to *Systematics*, the Institute's journal)

> Bennett and other members of the Institute Council met Sayyed Idries Shah.... After two years of intensive study Bennett and his colleagues were convinced that Idries Shah had a most significant contribution to make.... In 1965, the Council and Members offered Coombe Springs to Idries Shah who established there his Society for Understanding Fundamental Ideas.

The unsophisticated reader will not fail to notice the happy disposition of the four initials—the first time, however, that the term "Sufi" had appeared in connection with the teachings of

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Gurdjieff or Ouspensky. Subsequently Idries Shah disposed of the property and acquired an estate at Langton Green, whence he runs what is now described more grandiosely as the Institute for Cultural Research. His life-style, lovingly depicted for us by Lewis F. Courtland in *The Diffusion of Sufi Ideas*, shows us a man very much of this world, impressed by big names and revelling in the lionising and the personality cult that centre round him.

THE REAL SECRET, however, of Idries Shah's success must be sought not in himself but in his disciples. It is significant that the bulk of them come from the intellectual establishment: poets, novelists, journalists, critics, broadcasters. Indeed the whole affair throws an interesting light on the virtues and failings of our Western intelligentsia.

In some cases, of course, one may attribute credulity to senility, the menopause, a variety of personal inadequacies and insecurities. Many a intellectual, gazing from his ivory tower at a world given over to irrational violence, longs for some panacea, comprehensive in scope and not too demanding on the mind.

Something of this kind must be the explanation for the appearance in *Sufi Studies: East and West* of this strange medley of European and American figures from the fringes of oriental studies, supported by cosmopolitan expatriates from the Western-trained chanceries and bureaucracies of Asia, whose Eastern names are no doubt intended to give 'artistic verisimilitude' to what must be admitted to be a rather "unconvincing narrative. Certainly many of them have already committed themselves by accepting, for whatever motive, the status of "Fellow" of Idries Shah's Institute. The spiritual and intellectual level of their contributions is dismally low; most of them seem to be little more than reconstituted handouts from the Shah propaganda machine. Indeed, one may be forgiven for wondering whether they can really be distinguished from another category of Idries Shah's supporters—the mediocre, who, hovering around the margins of the world of learning but never of it, are at one and the same time impressed by showy and shallow scholarship and a pontifical air of omniscience, and delighted by attacks on academics. It does not seem to have occurred to Idries Shah that the gaps in his knowledge of the field, easy to conceal from the layman, would be immediately obvious to specialists in Islamic thought and culture, those whom he patronisingly describes as "conventional" or "traditional" scholars. Curiously, his contempt for the academic world has not stopped him from trying to creep in by the back door. His publicity repeatedly refers to a lecture he once gave to a history seminar at Sussex University, and even to the use of a single sentence from one of his books as a peg on which to hang a question in an Oxford University examination paper on medieval Catalan.

EQUALLY POTENT is the romantic lure of "the East." True, the East is less remote than it used to be, but there are still relatively inaccessible areas in Central Asia, the location of most of the exotic oriental names that spatter the works of Idries Shah (as of Gurdjieff before him). We even learn from the dust-cover of *Tales of the Dervishes* that he

> has met and recorded interviews and exchanges with the "Hidden Imam" of the Muslims

—a scoop indeed, for the Hidden Imam went into concealment during the 9th century A.D., and is to reappear only at the Day of Judgment. Imaginary meetings with remarkable men have, of course, been the stock-in-trade of these people ever since Gurdjieff's time.

The readiness of the intellectual to abandon his critical faculties is somewhat more surprising. Is it fear of being caught out, of failing to recognise a new idea, of being left behind when the bandwagon drives off? Or the relief of "unquestioning obedience and utter discipline" (Lefort, *op. cit.*, p. 39)? Or simply the schoolboy thrill of being initiated into a secret society, a mysterious brotherhood of near-supernatural beings? Whatever the cause, one cannot but be struck by the mental contortions undergone by followers of Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Idries Shah, in their attempts to reconcile what their rational faculty recognises as nonsense with the uncritical acceptance they feel must be given to a "Master." Kenneth Walker wrote (*Venture with Ideas*, p. 163):

> "Suddenly the answer came to me. All this that puzzled me in Gurdjieff's behaviour and in his writing, like many things that he did, served a purpose. This emotional disturbance in me, this shouting within me of contradictory voices, this incessant struggle between 'yes' and 'no', all this was deliberately provoked, both as a test and as a form of treatment."

But then the combination of the non-rational power of insight with the rational power to analyse and discriminate is rare. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky didn't have it, still less Idries Shah.

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THE COMMUNITY who handed over their destinies to Idries Shah "were convinced that he had a most significant contribution to make to the betterment of mankind in the present critical phase of human development. . . ." We have here perhaps the clue to the fatal flaw in Idries Shah's teaching, an impression that is confirmed when one reads his books.

The uneasy feeling that something vital is missing crystallises suddenly into the realisation that this is Sufism (if it deserves that name) without Islam, "Sufism" without religion, "Sufism" centred not on God but on man. Page after page of his writings do not even mention the name of God, the word "love", the concept of unity with God through love. He is far more concerned with prescriptions for self-improvement, directions for the achievement of personal happiness, guide-lines for a worldly élite. Robert Graves has it neatly summed up:

> "To be in the world but not of it, free from ambition, greed, intellectual pride, blind obedience to custom, or awe of persons higher in rank: that is the Sufi's ideal."

These may be admirable sentiments, but a brief glance at the quotations from Sufi poets given earlier in this article will show that Graves' ideal has nothing whatever to do with genuine Sufism. In this, of course, Idries Shah is merely being practical. The Western intellectual of today is above all a humanist, and is usually incapable of swallowing the idea of a transcendent God more omnipotent than himself. He delights in being mystified. But the mystifier must not go too far, he must remain firmly anchored within the world. The void left by the departure of religion must be filled, and how better than by the modern faith of science—or pseudo-science. So we learn that one Dr Robert Ornstein of Stanford University has, under the influence of Idries Shah, "matched electrically-monitored brain functions with Sufi patterns of thought."

IN THE SAME VEIN, though on a somewhat less frivolous level, are the writings of the American-trained Iranian psychologist Reza Arasteh (now based in Washington). He has a contribution in *Sufi Studies* under the intimidating title "Psychology of the Sufi Way to Individuation", a jargon-packed psycho-analytical interpretation of the Sufi phenomenon that mentions the name of "God" eight times in the course of ten thousand words, and then only in this kind of context: "To become like God represents a beautiful creation more than submission to the authoritarian image of God; it means 'becoming love and loving to save', not loving God to be saved." Among Arasteh's other works is *Rumi: The Persian, The Sufi*, originally published, under a slightly different title, in Teheran in 1965, (and re-issued in 1974 by Routledge & Kegan Paul). Arasteh is clearly influenced by Erich Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis. There are frequent references to him throughout the book, including a 10-page tribute, a courtesy gracefully acknowledged by a 3-page preface from the pen of Dr Fromm. According to the latter, the mysticism of Rumi deals not with "theology and intellectual speculations about God but with the inner experience of oneness with the world. . . . *This mysticism . . . is the last consequence of* rationalism." The author follows this line, reinterpreting Persian culture in terms of psychoanalysis, and analysing Rumi's personality on the basis of psychotherapy. The conclusion of all this is that Rumi was "one of the greatest humanists." What the Sufi has to do, according to Arasteh, is to listen to his "humanistic conscience", and in this way to part with his "phenomenal self" in order to achieve the state of "cosmic existence" or "transcendental consciousness." "The real self can be thought of as the crown of the unconscious, which is potentially conscious existence, the Sufi's goal."

To do Arasteh credit, his writing is considerably more profound, far better thought out, than that of the Master to whom he now offers his allegiance. But in the end his insistence on rationalising the religious phenomenon, on eliminating the spiritual, the angelic, the divine from his account of Islamic mysticism leads him to conclusions that may be good science, but have nothing to do with Sufism. By the end of the book God has completely disappeared, and we are left with a vague socio-political prescription:

> "The Near East [must] examine the sources of social contradictions in both the East and West and resolve these basic conflicts in terms of man's ultimate destiny, that is, the development of a healthy character and the establishment of peace. It is in terms of [this] course that Rumi and his related oriental heritage can be of great benefit to present-day leaders. . . . This view must be taken if the East is to develop a healthy society which will contribute to the gradual but total well-being of the individual, that is, to facilitate the evolution of man's rebirth without moulding him first to a social self, an intellectual self, or a robot."

Sufism, however, is not concerned with the betterment of the human race, but with leading it

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away from worldly preoccupations, with giving awareness of the world of God and the spirit, with diverting man's power to love from self-love to love of God, with guiding him in the search for reunion with the Absolute Source from which he sprang. This is not to argue that Sufi teaching no longer has anything to say to the modern world. It may well have, provided that it is founded upon truth and not falsehood. Both Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, two scholars from West and East who write acutely and knowledgeably about Sufism, would describe it (in the latter's words) as "the direct call of the Absolute to man inviting him to cease his wandering in the labyrinth of the relative and to return to the Absolute and the One; it appeals to what is most permanent and immutable in man. . . ." Above all, in a society dominated by mechanistic science, when already people are talking about "the man-made future", it is well to be reminded that man does not make the future, and that the world of matter is only the outward and temporary symbolisation of the real and immutable world of the spirit. To forget this leads to the subjection of human life to man-made laws that turn men into automata and statistics, deny the worth of human personality, and degrade man's spiritual role.

But pseudo-Sufis have nothing to say about all this. Their teachings even encourage negativism, passive non-participation, fatalistic submission to authority. Therein lies their danger.

The Progress of Poesy

I too would avail myself of the large and common
benefits of modern technology.

That on the Wings of Imagination a chartered jet
shall transport me to my inspiration.

That tapes may record the best and happiest moments
of the happiest and best minds.

That a fine excess of surprising subject-matter
be relayed to me by satellite.

That powerful pumps ensure the spontaneous overflow
of powerful feelings.

That cameras shall arrest the vanishing apparitions
which haunt the interlunations of life.

That sophisticated computers select the best words
and collocate them in the best order.

★

A pointed stick, some vegetable dye, a strip of bark
removed by stealth from the public park.

D. J. Enright

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Michael Wharton

A Short Industrial History of Rentacrowd, Ltd.

THE CLAQUE—or group of people, organised either for payment, through intimidation or even of their own free will, for systematically applauding theatrical or musical performances—is an institution as old as civilisation. Without it the lyre and violin recitals of the Emperor Nero would not have been nearly as successful as they were. Tyrants of all sizes have always counted on being able to summon or command large and enthusiastic crowds to cheer them on their state progresses. Even the big turn-outs for Roman triumphs, with their chained prisoners and other attractions for the masses, may not have been always entirely extempore, unrehearsed, and unorganised.

But it is only in fairly recent times, with the growth of the Protest Industry in the West, not merely for specific causes but as an end in itself—as an art-form, even—that the organisation of mobs has been put on a sound technical and commercial basis and has become an industry in the proper sense of the word. The United States may claim priority in this field; but it is England, pioneer of the original Industrial Revolution, which can claim to have been in the forefront of the Industrial Revolution of Protest, and to have developed the most refined techniques in the mechanisation of Dissent.

THE FIRM OF RENTACROWD, although it is by now by far the biggest mob-supplying agency in the world, with branches in almost every country, started in a very modest way. Towards the end of the year 1961 readers of the small advertisement sections of English newspapers might have noticed the following announcement:

> DICTATORS!!! When you liberate a territory or mop up a colonialist enclave are you often disappointed and upset at receiving only a tepid welcome from the liberated people?
>
> Why not let RENTACROWD help you? We can supply cheering crowds for all occasions—complete with flags, garlands, slogans etc. etc. Write to RENTACROWD, Box 482/A, for our free catalogue, beautifully illustrated in six colours. Whatever your special needs, we have the crowd for you, thanks to our staff of sociologists and motivational experts!
>
> A PROMINENT DICTATOR writes: "I was getting nervy and depressed after liberating six colonial enclaves in succession, in almost total silence. Then a friend told me about your RENTACROWD service. Without much hope, I admit, I decided to try your Special Anti-colonialist Raving Mob No. 2.
>
> "What a difference! What a welcome! Now I sleep well, eat well, am chock-full of health and energy, and am liberating colonialist enclaves and enslaved minorities in all directions.
>
> "You are welcome to use this letter in any way you please. RENTACROWD certainly did wonders for me and I can thoroughly recommend it." (name and address supplied).

THE FIRM OF RENTACROWD could not have started operations (and the question who its original founders were is and must remain a trade secret, at least as far as this world is concerned) at a better time. Even leaving out of account the demands of the overseas market—and even at this early stage *Rentacrowd* were already turning out a variety of well-tried outfits from the "Kassem" Howling Iraqi Mob No. 3 to the luxury "Lumumba"

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Super-raving Anti-colonialist Mob No. 6 ("the Mob for the Connoisseur")—it was the time, at home in England, of the great Aldermaston Anti-Nuclear Marches, the great sit-downs and demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, and on a lesser scale the well-organised anti-Rent protests in St Pancras and other parts of London.

It was a time of rapid expansion, and as supplies of purely human material began to grow inadequate, of increasing mechanisation. *Rentacrowd*'s original workshops and headquarters in South London soon began to prove far too small to cope with the increasing demand. In early 1962, *Rentacrowd* were already installed in a big new factory on the North Circular Road, complete with fully-staffed experimental laboratories and the latest slogan and folksong-turning machinery. Here the new semi-automated model demonstrators, with remote control, were rapidly developed, though it was realised that the "human"-type demonstrator, with its uneven performance and combination of advantages and defects, could never be entirely superseded.

The 1962 Catalogue offered a most impressive range. One outfit advertised in it, intended mainly for Left-wing demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, even includes a "small, hand-picked Fascist-type counter-demonstration in separate container." For comfortably-off progressive people who "preferred not to stir from their homes in Hampstead" there were "small hand-turned luxury mobs equipped with more literate and sophisticated slogans and with banners designed by well-known artists and experts in decor."

WITH THE INCREASING INVOLVEMENT of students in the Protest Industry, *Rentacrowd* took another giant leap forward. This is reflected in its increasingly complex organisation on the administrative side, and in the higher standards of expertise in the new science of protestology required by *Rentacrowd* executives. Here is an extract from a test-paper for Junior Executives (Field Division) as part of a course at the newly-opened *Rentacrowd* Training College at Sutton Roars (Staffs.):

1. On receipt of reports that 20,000 Africans have been massacred by Portuguese troops in Angola, your superiors contract to mount a nation-wide protest campaign, using all available units at maximum strength, with slogans, banners and prams in light support. Alone as duty officer at Field H.Q. you receive a correction at D-5 minutes reporting that the Africans were in fact killed in Rwanda, an emergent African State, as part of Government policy.

Describe, with diagrams, how you would convert the campaign into a searing exposure of the shortage of reading-matter provided for South African political prisoners.

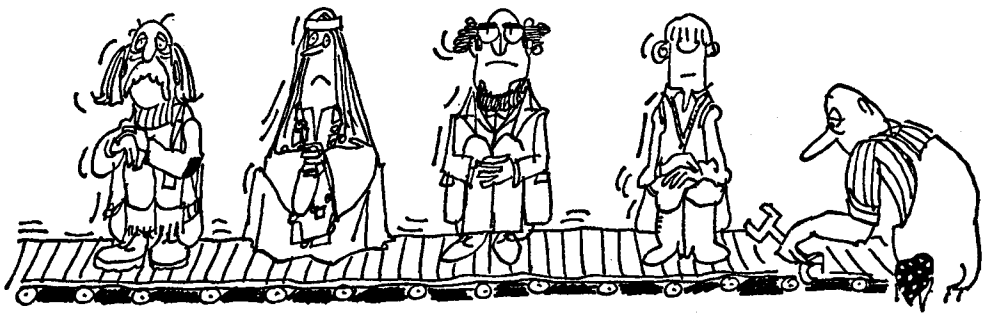
2. Design a poster which could be used, with effect, in *any* demonstration against *anything*.

3. An insignificant minority of misguided East Europeans are defying their properly constituted Communist Government and are brutally attacking Russian tanks with their bare hands. The Western Press is giving the incident undue attention. Describe the steps you would take to divert public indignation into more deserving channels.

4. Draw a diagram of the inside of a typical "progressive" student's head, marking the pressure-points at which the following slogans operate: (*a*) "Hands off Cuba!" (*b*) "Yanks Go Home!" (*c*) "Ban the Bomb!" Explain the elementary thought-processes involved.

5. Indicate what effect modern protest techniques might have had on *any one* of the following: (*a*) Frederick the Great; (*b*) Genghis Khan; (*c*) King Dingaan of the Zulus; (*d*) the Emperor Caligula.

6. Explain briefly why you have not mounted a protest demonstration against being asked to answer these questions.



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ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE, thanks to advances in electronics and cybernetics, a "second protesto-technical industrial revolution" was now at hand. There were those who deplored the "gradual elimination of the human element", the loss of the sense of idealism of an earlier day which came with increasing mechanisation. But an incident reported in 1965 shows how progress ("you can't put the clock back") was moving inexorably on.

Estimates of the number of student demonstrators engaged in the comparatively simple task of shouting down a Tory politician, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, as he was trying to make a speech from the steps of Leeds Town Hall, varied startlingly from one newspaper to another. In one "Right-wing" newspaper the figure was given as "about 250 students"; in another newspaper as "hundreds of young people"; while in the Communist *Daily Worker* (as it then was) it was "3,000 angry youngsters."

A spokesman for *Rentacrowd* (at a hastily summoned Press conference) explained the apparent discrepancy. Their research department, he said, had recently produced "a new type of electronic, semi-animated demonstrator which by the use of polarised light in a mental vacuum could be made to appear self-proliferating in favourable conditions (such as an autumn evening in the West Riding)." This was, he went on, "a major breakthrough in mob-engineering. It could mean that a single demonstrator would be able to produce effects of mass-hooliganism, terror and intimidation which would formerly have required the concerted efforts of a mob of four or five hundred." It was, he thought, "a big step forward in applied democracy."

THERE IS NO SIDE OF THE PROTEST INDUSTRY which this enterprising organisation has not, does not or cannot cater for. A progressive lecturer once complained that because his university was out in the country "the traditional method of registering protest by demonstrating with placards" was closed to students, since no one would see them. *Rentacrowd* immediately got in touch with the man with details of their University Service, which not only supplied (on special reduced terms) demonstrators to any part of the country, but could also supply "ordinary people, fully or semi-automated, who would stand about listening to them, approvingly or disapprovingly as required, and could be kicked, spat upon or otherwise dealt with according to the customer's needs. . . ." Alternatively, if a university was inconveniently situated from a demonstrational point of view *Rentacrowd* would run up a temporary university for protest purposes at any one of hundreds of convenient sites throughout Great Britain, subsequently dismantling it without extra charge.

The story is one of constant progress, of dedication and determination which if applied in other branches of industry might well have put this country, unchallenged and unchallengeable, at the very top of the League Table of World Economic Growth (see Chairman's Report for 1972). Take one instance from the year 1969, when the death of Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader, presented *Rentacrowd* technologists with one of the toughest technical problems they had ever had to face: no less than the equipment of thousands of Leftist demonstrators who had been programmed to shout "*Ho! Ho! Ho Chi Minh!*" with new circuits which would enable them to shout "*Ton! Ton! Ton Duc Thang!*" for hours on end instead.

A CONTEMPORARY REPORT describes how "a tight security clamp was placed on the *Rentacrowd* laboratories . . . after an explosion of phonemes which was thought to have wrecked a number of experimental models. 'They're asking us to attempt the impossible', said one scientist who managed to talk to the Press for a moment before he was dragged back into the smoke-shrouded building. . . ." But a *Rentacrowd* spokesman was reassuring. He admitted that the firm had urged the North Vietnamese authorities to choose a new President with a name which Western demonstrators could chant more easily. "But", he added encouragingly, "we are confident that with the will to win and the *Rentacrowd* know-how we shall iron out this snag as we've ironed out so many headaches before it." Experts thought it likely, all the

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same, that there would be a shift of emphasis in the British protest industry away from Viet Nam to new more fashionable areas, such as "Participation" and "the Plight of the Homeless." Whether this would benefit the homeless any more than it formerly benefited the Vietnamese, the report added sourly, "is, of course, beside the point."

FROM SOME OF THE DISADVANTAGES arising from the rapid growth of computerisation, even *Rentacrowd* was not immune. Giant computers were installed in 1971 to handle the bulk of the work in the wholesale department, and the possibility of computer-error is, as elsewhere, always present. For example, not long ago a demonstrational organiser in Lancashire who ordered three dozen "Winsome Leftist Toddler No 1" models for a demonstration in favour of Free School Milk and Nihilist Adventure Playgrounds was supplied instead with 25,000 semi-automated models of the "Student Fuzzy-Wuzzy Terrorist No. 3" type and 50,000 assorted Environmentalists.

The pioneering work of *Rentacrowd* in systematic mob-organisation has naturally had its effect in parts of the world where mobs, though very large in numbers, have been unable, because of technical backwardness, to realise their full potential. India is a case in point. When Mr Brezhnev, the Russian leader, visited that country in 1973, officials spent days touring New Delhi and neighbouring areas rounding up peasants, unemployed labourers, and hooligans to provide the vast cheering crowds required to line the streets to greet him. A *Rentacrowd* spokesman was not slow to point out how much trouble and expense could have been saved if the order for the whole operation had been placed in their hands. What India needed was more technical know-how. Its reserves of demonstrational manpower, enormous though they were, would eventually have to be strengthened and augmented by the use of electronic, semi-automated mobs, operated by remote control. Through its Indian subsidiary, *Rentacrowd* (*India*), the organisation had already set up a research institute at Goondanagar, near Bombay, where very interesting work was being done on super-violent mob techniques. This was *not* "neo-colonialism", the spokesman said, anticipating an obvious objection. It was Aid to the Third World.

ONE POINT is often forgotten. *Rentacrowd*, though noted mainly for its Leftist mobs—in Great Britain the demand so far has come almost entirely from the Left—is in theory "non-political", as its original prospectus expressly states. Many of its standard, best-selling lines could readily be converted from "Left-wing" to "Right-wing" or "Fascist" demonstrators. It is merely a question of switching the slogans and making a few other minor adjustments. The resources of the industry are virtually unlimited, and the most improbable-sounding orders could rapidly be carried out.

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A case in point. Early in 1974, when the agitation against "Property Speculators", epitomised in London's Centre Point Building, was at its height and the building was actually "occupied" by a force of *Rentacrowd* "squatters" (simplified, easy-to-operate models), there were rumours that property speculators might retaliate by occupying the homes of some of the Squatters' Leaders themselves. Fortunately, perhaps, the idea came to nothing. But *Rentacrowd's* Research Division were only too anxious to face the challenge of producing crowds of semi-automated property speculators for the purpose. As a spokesman said in his characteristically spokesmanlike way: "We are confident that the backroom boffins have the know-how, the dynamism, and the sheer will to win, to come up with the answer. . . ."

WHAT (to quote the Company's latest Annual Report) of the future? *Rentacrowd's* Export Division—a vital factor in our balance of payments—is steadily expanding, though there are some countries (Switzerland, for example) which, even though demonstrational material in the shape of a "multiracial community" seems abundant, are yet unaccountably backward. There is some alarmist talk of a recession in the howling mob industry, even of the complete disappearance of the private sector as Communism advances. *Rentacrowd* activities in Russia, China, and other Communist-ruled countries, where the industry has been nationalised and almost all demonstrations are State-organised, are, of course, negligible. However, there is some talk of plans to export British-designed semi-automated secret policemen and people's militia as part of a trade agreement in the interests of *détente*.

Yet there is little reason for pessimism, little reason to doubt that the final consummation foreseen by *Rentacrowd's* founders may well be fulfilled, and the whole human race, set at odds by envy and hatred through the obsessive belief that everybody is in some way being discriminated against by somebody else, will have become one enormous universal howling mob.

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George Feaver

An Indian Melodrama

The American Indians (IV)

THE VOICE OF "RED POWER" grew steadily in stridency in the years immediately preceding the takeover of Alcatraz Island in 1969. Although crowded out of the headlines by the Black Power and Women's Liberation Movements, the new Indian militancy had found its earliest articulation in a series of "fish-ins" demanding the restitution of Indian fishing rights along the salmon rivers of the Pacific North West. Then, with the Alcatraz episode, a new and more visible pattern of protest emerged. The landing on the notorious site of the former Federal penitentiary was soon followed by the seizure of the old immigration station on Ellis Island in New York Harbour, and of a deactivated Army post, Fort Lawson, in Seattle.

But these were mere publicity stunts that paled in comparison with the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) building in Washington, D.C., in November of 1972. If Alcatraz was the Indians' "Selma", as spokesmen would have us believe, then the BIA incident was more like their "Watts." It all grew out of a plan evolved in the late summer of 1972 to send three automobile caravans from the West Coast on a "Trail of Broken Treaties" that would end in the nation's capital on the eve of the 1972 Presidential elections. A year earlier, Hank Adams (founder of the "Survival of American Indians Association" and organiser of the Seattle contingent in the caravan) had chaired a committee of civil rights activists to frame a 15-point programme outlining a new national Indian policy. It was hoped that the proposals it contained could serve, once the car caravan arrived in Washington, as the basis of negotiations with Washington officials.

But when the caravan reached Minneapolis *en route* to its final destination, the Adams "proposals" were eclipsed by a new set of 20 "demands" drawn up by the militant "American Indian Movement" (AIM).[1] Headquartered in Minneapolis, the AIM was to assume an increasingly visible role in the leadership of the Trail of Broken Treaties. Founded in 1969, its membership was largely drawn from young Indians resident in urban slums rather than on reservations. Several of the organisation's most prominent figures (as it later became known) had extensive criminal records in Minneapolis. AIM co-founder Dennis Banks had been convicted 15 times on charges including burglary and assault and battery, prompting an Indian observer to quip that the organisation "was cooked up in the Minnesota penitentiary."[2] And the Bellecourt brothers (one an executive director of the Minneapolis group, the other head of the Denver chapter) had served time for a variety of felonies, including burglary, armed robbery, and aggravated assault. These facts notwithstanding, various Federal agencies had up to the time of the Trail of Broken Treaties already paid out some $113,000 in grants to assist AIM in operating urban Indian "educational facilities." If a revolution was in the offing, then it would be a state-subsidised one.

These three, plus a fourth AIM leader, Russell Means, an Oglala Sioux from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota (he had spent all but six of his 33 years living in cities), were to emerge as the principal spokesmen of the Indian protestors who occupied the BIA shortly after the arrival of the Broken Treaties caravan in Washington on 2 November. The seizure of the building occurred after a day of confused bargaining between caravan leaders and officials

[1] For background see Alvin M. Josephy Jr., "Wounded Knee and All That—What the Indians Want", *New York Times Magazine* (18 March 1973), p. 74.

[2] Michael Satchell, "Police Report 3 BIA Protesters' Crime Records", *Washington Star—News Service* (13 November 1972).

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over temporary lodgings for the Indians during their planned week-long demonstrations, and after the caravan was rebuffed in its attempts to enter Arlington Cemetery where the demonstrators planned to hold "spiritual services" for fallen Indian warriors.

FROM THERE THEY WENT to a government building whose auditorium they had been granted permission to use. They found it locked on their arrival. They then marched to the BIA, and after a hurried conference with officials, were told they could stay in the building for the time being. Up to this point the mood of the demonstrators had been festive, and that of the Washington officials conciliatory. But when the building's security guard changed in late afternoon the new guards, apparently ignorant of the agreement to allow the Indians to stay in the building, tried to evict them. A scuffle occurred, the guards were ejected, and the entrance to the building barricaded. A mixed force of U.S. Marshals, Washington, D.C. policemen, and U.S. Parks Service officers took up positions outside the building. And shortly afterwards the Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary with jurisdiction over the BIA, Harrison Loesch, denounced the occupation leaders as "bloody revolutionaries" who were unrepresentative of most Indians. AIM's Dennis Banks, in turn, exhorted his "swiftest and strongest braves" to "do anything you have to do"[3] to hold the building. Amid escalating charges and countercharges, it was clear that a full-scale confrontation was in train.

At a news conference the Indians vowed to resist any attempts to dislodge them until their demands—ranging over a sweeping reform of the BIA, the removal of several Federal officials, a full re-examination of the status of existing Indian-U.S. treaties, and new programmes for Indian educational, health, welfare and economic opportunities—were met. Federal officials, in light of the recent history of confrontation politics, understandably resisted the impulse to remove the demonstrators by force. "We didn't want another Kent State in the BIA", a White House spokesman was to comment retrospectively, "and we knew damned well we'd have one if police attempted a forcible ouster of the well-armed Indians. . . ."[4] Just how well-armed remained unclear. But a *UPI* report (filed two days after the occupation began) noted that some of the occupiers were armed with guns and Molotov cocktails, and others with "small missiles and sharp objects." A rumour circulated that dynamite had been placed on the top floor of the building by members of the local Black Panther chapter, who were inside the building to pledge "solidarity" with the occupiers.

A FULL WEEK PASSED—during which President Nixon was returned for a second and (as events were to transpire) stormy Presidential term in a landslide victory over George McGovern—before the Indians gave up the building. But the agreement which preceded the evacuation left many observers wondering: would the White House, so eager with the prospect of jubilant Republican victory celebrations at hand to rid the capital of the embarrassing situation at the BIA, later pay dearly for the terms that eventually ended the occupation? Firstly, the team of White House negotiators (led by Leonard Garment) agreed in meetings with AIM leaders to appoint a 20-man Federal task force to study the 20 "demands" of the demonstrators. Secondly, they agreed to grant amnesty to the Indians from prosecution for seizing the BIA building. Thirdly, they actually agreed, in keeping with the notedly conciliatory spirit of the occasion, to assist the Indians financially to encourage their exit from Washington. Thus (as Frank Carlucci, an Office of Management and the Budget official directly responsible to President Nixon, later told an incredulous House of Representatives Interior Affairs sub-committee) the Office of Economic Opportunity paid the protestors some $66,650 to cover their travel expenses. Just how much "Economic Opportunity" was involved was hinted at in his further remarks. The figure was arrived at (he explained) by allocating 10 cents per mile and $6-a-day in travel funds for the 1,200 Indians that the protestors claimed were all present at the BIA occupation. But Carlucci allowed, under questioning, that while the government had taken all possible steps to ensure that the funds were used for travel, "we could not follow the actual dollars past the first level of disbursement. Nor could we insist on travel vouchers. . . ." Earlier, a *UPI* dispatch of 9 November had noted that in the evacuation of the building, as protestors made their way out, they had passed through the BIA auditorium

[3] Alice Zarrillo, "Indians Vow Not to Leave Without Fight", *UPI* (4 November 1972).
[4] Peggy Simpson, "Strange Saga of Indians: Who Won the Struggle?", *AP* (12 November 1972).

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"where one of their leaders was stationed with a black attaché case from which he dispensed the money from piles that included $100 bills. . . ."[5]

As the government reoccupied the building, it became quickly apparent that the bag money was not all the demonstrators had taken with them. The building was a shambles. Hundreds of thousands of official papers lay strewn inches thick over the floors. Windows were smashed, lavatories wrecked, walls badly damaged and covered with graffiti. Moreover, art works and artifacts worth over $700,000—as well as some $250,000 in typewriters, rugs, office furniture and other equipment—were damaged or missing. Officials estimated the total damage in excess of two million dollars.[6]

Something over a ton of BIA documents were transported out of the building by the departing Indians. They planned to make them public at a later date, as Dennis Banks told the media, because they contained "incriminating evidence" against certain public officials in the Western States. Some of the stolen items were later recovered in scattered parts of the country. Thirty-one paintings were returned through the YMCA, which declined to say who gave them up. Office machines and BIA documents were seized in Oklahoma; paintings, artifacts and books at an Indian college in Kansas; and a large cache of 26 cartons of BIA papers was traced to a vacant house in North Carolina.

The "New Indian Wars", in passing from theory into practice, had arrived with a flourish. A fort had fallen; a raiding party scattered safely.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BIA DEBACLE Deputy-Commissioner Louis Bruce (an Oglala Sioux-Mohawk who demonstrated his solidarity with the Trail of Broken Treaties demonstrators by remaining in the BIA building with the protestors during the first night of the occupation) was removed from his BIA post. But so was his counterpart, Deputy-Commissioner John O. Crow (a Cherokee and a moderate who was unsympathetic to the AIM militants). Perhaps more significantly, Assistant-Secretary Harrison Loesch, whose resignation was one of the specific demands of the protestors, was also sacked. These developments pleased no one more than the militants, who viewed them as further concessions on the part of the government in Washington.

When the Nixon Administration, doubtless stung by the abortive BIA evacuation agreement, officially rejected the 20 demands of the militant Indians early in the new year, the news was greeted by AIM with an air of undiminished defiance. Already plans were well advanced to shift the focus of AIM's activist tactics westwards to the great interior plateau states where the majority of reservation Indians made their home. At the end of January 1973 several hundred AIM supporters gathered in Rapid City, South Dakota, to hold a "regional conference." During the following month there occurred a number of incidents in which AIM supporters played a prominent role. A protest demonstration was held at Custer, South Dakota, to demand that murder charges be brought against a white man freed on $5,000 bond after being charged with manslaughter in the stabbing-to-death of an Indian. This led to a club-swinging free-for-all with the local constabulary that was followed by the burning of the Court House and the Chamber of Commerce building. Suddenly, it seemed, frontier days were here again. Shortly afterwards bar-brawls involving whites and Indians erupted in Rapid City, and in the aftermath 40 Indians found themselves in the hoosegow. On 12 February over 200 Indians appeared in Sturgis—Colonel Samuel Sturgis was a 7th Cavalry hero prominently involved in the hunting down of the Nec Perse after the Little Big Horn—to witness the setting of bond for an Indian (held in the murder of a white) who had previously been denied bail.

And then, on the evening of 27 February, a car cavalcade of several hundred AIM supporters drove into the tiny hamlet of Wounded Knee on the sprawling Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. They raided the trading post for weapons and supplies, and barricaded themselves with eleven hostages (ranging in age from 11 to 82) in the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church. Custer, Sturgis, and now Wounded Knee—the pattern of AIM's demonstrations in South Dakota seemed more than ever like an attempt, inspired by the script of Dee Brown's best-selling *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, to enact an historical caricature of the trail taken by their Indian forebears in the first Indian Wars.

[5] "Indian Protesters Leave BIA Offices Peacefully", *UPI* (9 November 1972); also "Protesting Indians Received $67,000 to Quit Washington, House Group Told", *AP* (5 December 1972).

[6] Howard Fields, "Mistakes Seen in Handling of Indians", *UPI* (27 November 1972).

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INSIDE THE CHURCH, AIM leader Russell Means told his followers:

> "Those of you of faint heart should go home. We don't feel bad about that. . . . We are taking our last stand here. We hold the whole Wounded Knee Valley till death do us part."[7]

In a telephone interview the following day, he added that the occupiers had "high-powered rifles, shotguns, explosives and 14 hand-grenades" and that the government had two choices before them: either to "attack and wipe us out" or to negotiate. He called for Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Indian treaties, a full Senate investigation of the BIA, and an inquiry into alleged corrupt practices by elected tribal officials. By now, in a pattern reminiscent of the BIA affair and a lengthy series of 1960s protest-politics antecedents, heavily-armed Federal marshals had taken up positions across from Indian barricades and were supported by armoured personnel carriers. As the press swarmed to the scene, private aircraft carrying photographers were shot at by the Indians as they swooped low to take pictures. It all reminded the nation that while the occupation already bore many of the hallmarks of a class-B Hollywood Western, its inexperienced cast threatened at any moment to turn it into a scenario with a deadly difference.

THE OCCUPATION OF WOUNDED KNEE was indeed a media natural; and, as armchair theatre, it quickly moved to centre stage in the national news. The texture of the central plot was soon enriched by the introduction of skilfully orchestrated sub-plots, unfolded with an impressively adroit sense of dramatic timing in the wings. Thus, South Dakota's two Democratic Senators, the 1972 Presidential standard-bearer George McGovern and James Abourezk (who was in fact born and raised on the Sioux Rosebud Indian Reservation near Pine Ridge, where his Lebanese father had for years run a trading post) flew out from Washington, accompanied by aides of Senators Kennedy and Fulbright, and negotiated the release of the hostages. At this point Leon Cook (President of the moderate National Congress of American Indians) commented that his group had "mixed feelings" about militant actions such as the AIM takeover at Wounded Knee.[8] And in New York, AIM director Vernon Bellecourt spent 45 minutes with a chief aide to United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim (as it happened, he was an Asian Indian, C. V. Narasimhan), urging that the United Nations intervene at Wounded Knee. Taking a leaf from the late Malcolm X's book of theatrical tactics he demanded, without success, that the AIM be allowed to address the Security Council.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT WOUNDED KNEE, the stage set had been prepared and negotiations between Justice Department lawyers and AIM leaders began in earnest in a machine-stitched tepee.

Remembering the BIA scenario, Federal officials this time seemed intent on rejecting any kind of amnesty for the villains. They did suggest in a written offer passed in to the occupied village, however, that the protestors would be allowed to leave without mass arrests so long as they surrendered their weapons and identified themselves to Federal agents at the roadblocks as they left. The militants, alas, were following a different script. The offer was burned and the

[7] Walter Fisk, "Witness to a Takeover", *U.S. News Service* (1 March 1973); and James R. Quinn, "Indians Hold 11 at Wounded Knee", *UPI* (1 March 1973).

[8] A poignant example of the powers of suggestion already brought into play by the Wounded Knee occupation was provided in the bizarre episode which transpired at Gallup, New Mexico on 1 March 1973, just two days after the AIM takeover at Pine Ridge Reservation. On that date Larry Casuse, who a short time before had been just another Navajo student at Gallup High School, schoolboy footballer and officer of the Indian Club, abducted Mayor Emmet Garcia at gunpoint and held him in a sporting-goods shop across the street from City Hall. He was later shot by police who rescued the Mayor, or he committed suicide; reports varied. According to Calvin Trillin, "U.S. Journal, Gallup, N.M.: You Always Turn Your Head", *The New Yorker* (12 May 1973, pp. 122–132), young Casuse had become a fanatical convert to *Indians Against Exploitation:*

> "He had spent some time talking to Navajo medicine men, and had spoken to his mother about wanting to go back to the reservation and live simply in the traditional Navajo way. He and his friends seemed particularly taken with the concept of 'false people', people who pretend to understand but actually are so lacking in the compassion and sensitivity inherent in the Navajo way that they have a questionable claim on being human beings. . . . Casuse obviously intended to hold the Mayor hostage as a way of negotiating for an investigation into Gallup's treatment of Indians or a compromise on specific demands. Precisely that type of negotiation was taking place at the time at Wounded Knee. . . ."

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ashes ceremoniously returned in an envelope by a stony-faced courier.[9] Instead, AIM—which was by this time being advised by veteran theatre-of-politics producer and Chicago conspiracy-trial attorney William Kunstler, a top box-office attraction of the 1960s—demanded a meeting at Wounded Knee with the highest-ranking Interior Department official responsible for Indian affairs. It was clear, from the further demand that the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council at Pine Ridge be dissolved and new elections be held, that the militants' plot had a different villain than that of the Justice Department's version. And he now made his appearance on stage in the person of the Council President, Richard Wilson. In a flashback, as it were, it was revealed that Wilson had led his Sioux Tribal Council in November 1972 in a vote condemning the AIM seizure of the BIA, and he had subsequently obtained a tribal court order enjoining Russell Means from assembling in Pine Ridge. AIM, accusing Wilson and his Council allies of "corruption", now called for his removal.

Negotiations were stalemated as the different story-lines of the two scripts thus revealed themselves. Amid sporadic outbursts of gunfire and the sound of far-off alarums, positions hardened on both sides of the barricades. Describing the situation as "extremely grave", U.S. Justice Department officials, in true Western "showdown" fashion, set a deadline for the evacuation of the village by sundown, 8 March. They also called on the occupiers to send out their women and children. Equally dramatically, AIM's Dennis Banks, in an Indian rendition of the-cavalry-are-coming ploy, retorted that five caravans carrying 1,500 Indian reinforcements from out of the state were converging on Wounded Knee "to bring this whole thing to an end."[10] Thus, despite an undeniable undercurrent of gravity there remained more than a little of the melodrama of a Hollywood Western about it all. Certainly one correspondent, who spent a sleepless night in Wounded Knee, was impressed with the alternating images of latent terror and farce in the situation. As the 8 March deadline approached and a blue *Coupe de Ville* Cadillac shuttled harried negotiators back and forth between the lines, Ken Huff reported:

> Seven Indian leaders stripped, some naked, others to their shorts, and entered an Indian sweat lodge . . . to receive clarity of mind and body. The warriors, perhaps 150 of them, seemed perfectly willing to die. With the sun setting behind their backs and the chill wind whipping up puffs of dust, they formed a semicircle and watched as the tribal fathers emerged from the steaming lodge.
>
> A Sioux spiritual leader named Leonard Crow Dog struck up a chant in the Lakota language. As each warrior passed by, he blessed him and painted a slash or a circle of red powder under the left eye. Each warrior then stepped into a white tepee, making a holy sign over the bleached skull of a buffalo head.[11]

The melodramatic aspect of the showdown was the subject of *Miami News* political cartoonist Ed Wright's mock-serious caricature: harried BIA officials huddled behind a barrier of Federal issue automobiles in the style of an encircled Wild West wagon-train. Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*, characteristically more solemn where confrontations between officialdom and dissidents are concerned, wondered why the Government was causing such a fuss when the Indians "actually have mostly old hunting rifles and a few Molotov cocktails that might well not work. . . ." Indeed, in his own earnest way, Wicker doubtless helped to heighten the suspense of the unfolding drama, with his warning that should Federal forces mount an armed attack on the village, "then as on that very ground in 1890, as at Attica in 1971, there could be another useless, senseless slaughter. . . ."[12]

AS IT HAPPENED, the deadline passed without incident. Instead, responding to the advice of a group of National Council of Churches clergymen that what was needed was compromise on both sides, the Government forces withdrew their roadblocks at checkpoints around the village on Saturday, 10 March. From Washington, the Justice Department announced it had taken the action because its objectives had already been reached, and that it was now ready to present evidence seeking indictments from a Federal grand jury against those involved in the seizure of Wounded Knee. But AIM spokesmen told a different story. They claimed that in the negotia-

[9] F. Richard Ciccone, "Indians Offer Counterplan For Truce", *AP* (6 March 1973).

[10] James R. Quinn, "Indian Brigade Heads For S.D.", *UPI* (3 March 1973).

[11] Ken Huff, "A Suspenseful Show of Red Power", in *Time* (19 March 1973), p. 20.

[12] Tom Wicker, "Will Wounded Knee Become Another Attica?", *New York Times Service* (9 March 1973). Wicker's assessment of the militants' weaponry was disputed by Horace Webb of the Justice Department who claimed the Indians had M60 machine guns that "could just wipe out a group of men before they could react. . . ." And a UPI Wirephoto (published 10 March 1973) showed an Indian protestor brandishing a sophisticated Soviet-designed AK.47 assault rifle.

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tions of the previous two days Justice had agreed to their demand that a high-ranking Interior official travel to Wounded Knee to bargain directly with them. They proposed to hold on to the village until his arrival. In effect, on AIM's interpretation, the withdrawal of the roadblocks was tantamount to a moral victory for the Indians. Indeed, Russell Means told newsmen that the militants "want to see headlines that say 'U.S. SURRENDERS TO INDIANS!'." Buoyed by what they took to be a loss of will on the part of the Government forces, the militants that night slaughtered a nearby rancher's cow, held "spiritual ceremonies" around a huge bonfire, and celebrated with dancing, drum-beating, peace-pipe smoking and chanting.

THE PEACE was short-lived. Within 24 hours shooting had erupted again and a Federal agent was shot in the wrist.[13] "We were sure they would pack up and disappear into the night", said a perplexed official of the unsuccessful strategy of removing the roadblocks. Instead, AIM had actually increased its forces over the week-end, taking advantage of the lifted blockade to receive fresh carloads of supporters, most of them armed.

"We are serious about this", asserted Means defiantly. "We will now deal with the United States government based on the 1868 treaty with the Sioux. The government sued for peace in that treaty, you remember. We beat the shit out of them. . . ." The Fort Laramie Treaty (1868) to which he referred had promised Sioux Indians all the land west of the Missouri River in the Dakota Territory (an area which nowadays includes the entire states of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana). "Now we want it", Means explained, with notable economy of expression.[14]

Federal officers made little attempt to hide their annoyance over Means' *machismo*.[15] The Government restored its roadblocks around the village on Monday morning. The "grandstanding" of the AIM leadership struck them as akin to that of aspiring film starlets whose overnight box-office successes had gone to their heads. Chief U.S. Marshal Wayne Colburn, commander of the 300 FBI agents and marshals at the site, spoke for his men when, threatening to "starve out" the insurgents if necessary, he promised that he was "sure as hell planning on changing their life-style. . . ."[16] Time seemed to be on his side. Two days later the Federal grand jury returned its first indictments against the militants, naming 31 persons in the takeover of Wounded Knee on charges of burglary, larceny, conspiracy, and civil disorder. Concurrently, Richard Wilson's Oglala Sioux Tribal Council adopted one resolution asking the BIA to remove all non-tribesmen from the reservation and another holding AIM responsible for all acts of violence committed while its members remained on the reservation.

AIM had now been in control of Wounded Knee for a little more than two weeks. According

[13] "Wounded Knee Shoot-Out Erupts, FBI Agent Hurt", *AP* (12 March 1973).

[14] The treaty argument has been a standard feature of the rhetoric of Indian militancy, amounting to a claim that the U.S. has no legal jurisdiction over Indians because treaties signed in the 19th century have never been honoured by the Government. But a recent ruling by U.S. Federal District Judge Warren Urbom rejects the claim of AIM sympathisers that the 1868 Sioux Treaty gave the tribe, and not the U.S., jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed on the Pine Ridge Reservation during the Wounded Knee occupation. Despite an "ugly history" that might make Americans "retch at the recollection", including "treaties pocked by duplicity", Judge Urbom said, "the conquest of Indian tribes by the Army in the last century has made the Indians subject to the legislative powers of the United States." He added that he was merely upholding the Supreme Court, which "has ruled consistently against the concept of Indian sovereignty." Martin Waldron, "U.S. Judge Bars Indian Claim of Sovereignty Over Lands", *International Herald Tribune*, 20 January 1975.

[15] Sentiments, even on the evidence of such an openly sympathetic account as Robert Burnette and John Koster, *The Road to Wounded Knee* (1974), p. 264, which were apparently shared on Means' side of the roadblocks. Ramon Roubideaux of the Wounded Knee Legal Defense/Offense Team later admitted that he "actively disliked some of his wards." "I've dealt with some big ego problems in my day", he told Burnette and Koster, "but this AIM bunch is the limit." Means, he felt, was "just too militant":

> "I set up a dinner for him to speak to these Rapid City businessmen, and he told them that if we didn't get the Black Hills back by 1976, he'll take them back at gunpoint. Man, you just don't *say* things like that in South Dakota, because these guys have guns too! I thought somebody might shoot us right on the spot!"

[16] Leroy F. Aarons, *Washington Post Service* (13 March 1973). As Richard Hughes, "U.S. Agents Tighten Net Around Indians", *UPI* (14 March 1973) elaborated, the Government was "researching" the possibility "of cutting off electrical, water and telephone services to the militants in an 'attempt to change their life-style to the point where they will want to come out peacefully'." The vocabulary speaks volumes about the differences between words and deeds in the circumstances of the first Wounded Knee and the second.

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to a special in-depth survey of a national cross-section of 1,472 households (conducted by pollster Louis Harris during the week of March 15–23), some 93% of the sample had followed the coverage of the takeover and its aftermath. Of these, a clear majority sympathised with the militants. As Harris interpreted the responses to his questions, "It appears that the American people are suffering from a deep sense of guilt over the way Indians have been treated in this country. . . ."

As the curtain was rung down on the first act of the tragi-comedy of Wounded Knee, the AIM militants had evidently endeared themselves to the national audience as the "good guys" of the piece. As the house lights came up, the nation's sentiments were clearly engaged in the Indians' behalf, locked as they so dramatically were in a desperate bid to outdistance the superior forces of the Federal side who were relentlessly closing in on them as had the U.S. 7th Cavalry of old.

THE HARRIS POLL seems to have been conducted just as public support for the radicals began to decline. For this there were a variety of reasons. Initially, the internal feuding of the Interior Department and its seeming inability to co-ordinate its efforts with those of the Justice Department to achieve a settlement with the militants, had portrayed the Government in an embarrassing light before the general public (and a White House spokesman was quoted as saying at the time of the BIA occupation that he had "never seen any Federal agencies as polarised as the Interior and BIA"). Now the good intentions of the Indians themselves came under closer scrutiny as the occupation dragged on. Its imperfections of coordination notwithstanding, the Government was unquestionably intent on bringing the Wounded Knee affair to a conclusion. But AIM seemed increasingly carried away with the heady experience of its prolonged exposure to the national limelight. Thus, following a flying visit to Wounded Knee by Marvin Franklin (Interior Department Assistant-Secretary for Indian affairs), Justice Department lawyers presented a modified proposal to the occupiers. Up to seven AIM leaders would be escorted to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for talks with high officials of the Interior Department. The Wounded Knee occupiers would, under this arrangement, lay down their arms within three hours of the start of talks. They would proceed to Government roadblocks where, if warrants were outstanding for them, they were to submit to arrest.

But the Indians, who had just carried out an unsuccessful attempt to extend their "territory" by taking over the community hall at nearby Porcupine, rejected the proposal out of hand. Castigating the United States as "an outlaw nation", they now demanded to deal directly with the Great White Father, President Nixon himself. By this time, such rhetoric was leading more than one journalist who was reporting from the spot to an uneasy suspicion that they were being "put on" by AIM. In the 26 March issue of *Time* there was a story chronicling the extent to which the militants' leadership had unabashedly manipulated the media within the Wounded Knee enclave.

> "Cameras over here", [Means] called out one afternoon, directing photographers to where the bunkers were being enlarged. Then AIM forces "arrested" four men attempting to enter their compound. Released a few minutes later, the men were paraded at gunpoint with their hands up past whirring cameras, then let go. Learning that one photographer had missed a shot of the men leaving, AIM guards forced the "prisoners" to re-enact their release.[17]

The theatrical antics of the AIM insurgents easily passed over into deadly flirtations with violence. On 23 March it was reported that an estimated 1,000 rounds of gunfire were exchanged between the occupiers and the Federal forces surrounding Wounded Knee. Such lethal games of make-believe "Cowboys and Indians" were bound sooner or later to lead to unhappy endings. Three days after this incident the Chief U.S. Marshal for Nebraska, Lloyd Grimm, was shot in the chest by a sniper's bullet and paralysed from the waist down.

ANOTHER FACTOR contributing to the erosion of public support for the AIM militants was the late but spectacular arrival on the scene of *radical chic*. Now, at one time or another, the names of a number of well-known personalities associated with protest politics (*viz* Ralph

[17] "Trap At Wounded Knee", *Time* (26 March 1973). See also Neil Hickey's four-part "Was The Truth Buried At Wounded Knee?" series in *TV Guide* (1–22 December 1973), especially Part 3, "'Cameras Over Here! And Be Sure to Shoot My Good Side': How The Siege Was Staged for TV" (15 December 1973).

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Abernathy and Angela Davis)[18] had been linked sympathetically with the Wounded Knee occupation. But these made only ripples compared to the wave caused by film-star Marlon Brando's announcement (from Tahiti) of support for the Wounded Knee insurgents. He chose as his forum the annual Hollywood Academy Awards ceremonies. He sent a strikingly beautiful bead-and-buckskin-clad San Francisco model, one Sacheen Littlefeather, to decline on his behalf the award of an Oscar for his performance in the film *The Godfather*. Sacheen introduced herself as an Apache Indian. But as it later transpired, she was actually an aspiring actress named Maria Cruz, and a Hollywood neighbour of *Godfather* director Francis Ford Coppola. Her chief claim to fame before the Brando assignment had been being chosen "Miss Vampire 1970" in a national contest to promote the now-defunct TV series *Dark Shadows*.[19]

Badly bitten by the Bitch-Goddess Fame after her impressive début before the Academy Awards footlights, Miss Cruz was to prove only too willing to doff her buckskins when offered the chance, following her Oscar appearance, to do a nude layout for *Playboy* Magazine. The magazine's press agents, describing their forthcoming nudie triumph, summoned up their best prose for a press release: "the black-haired, brown-eyed beauty [will be seen] posed *au naturel*—against natural backgrounds of the woodlands, fields and streams well-known to her ancestors. . . ."

The October 1973 *Playboy* did carry a feature on "Ms. Littlefeather", a female person willing to put her body on the line who (as the magazine put it) had admirably managed "to combine a career and a cause." "Acting makes me happy", Sacheen explained in the text accompanying the pictures that revealed her pulchritude: now in a sheer see-through negligée; astride a windy knoll, in the posture of a sort of cheesecake Indian scout of old; now against a fern-thick embankment, her ample breasts thrust proudly before the reader's gaze; now lolling invitingly in a lush summer meadow, her pubic hair paraded in soft sunlight; or now, more explicitly, if entirely incongruously, seated nude in a wooden chair with an antique telephone pressed to her ear. "I only hope I can make others just as happy *watching* me", she added, needlessly.[20]

Her career distractions aside, Miss Cruz's unexpected Academy Awards appearance had temporarily stunned the audience into silence. But when she had begun to explain that Marlon Brando could not bring himself to accept the Oscar because of the film industry's historic mistreatment of the American Indian and its substantial contribution to the sort of racialism currently evidenced at Wounded Knee, the silence had changed to mixed catcalls and light applause. Raquel Welch remarked, as she introduced the best-actress award, that she hoped the winner "doesn't have a cause"; and Clint Eastwood added, in announcing the "best-picture-of-the-year", that he hoped he didn't have to "present

[18] Abernathy visited the site of the occupation on 8 March and after meeting the AIM leaders promised to ask the White House to intercede. Angela Davis arrived on 23 March to talk with the rebel leaders of the besieged village. But she was turned away and escorted from the reservation under terms of a tribal ordinance (hurriedly passed by Richard Wilson's council) prohibiting persons who were not members of the Oglala Sioux from being on the reservation.

[19] *Photoplay* (July 1973), p. 22.

[20] "Sacheen", *Playboy* (October 1973), pp. 93–95. Sacheen's *Playboy* appearance illustrated an uncomfortable tension between the "feminist" and the "nativist" scenarios of revolutionary theatre. But her willing transformation into a degraded sex object was hardly the sole outrage committed against the sensibilities of the Women's Liberation Movement by the chauvinistic Wounded Knee "braves" and their supporters. Robert Burnette and John Koster, *The Road to Wounded Knee* (1974), pp. 230–231, recall of the news coverage of the AIM occupation by "young feminist-oriented writers working for slick magazines" that:

> "After discovering to their shock that Indians no longer lived in tepees, they arrived inside Wounded Knee and found Means sitting around in a trailer house reading comic books when he wasn't doing his trick on guard duty. Their disillusionment was complete when they heard him talk and realised that his flip, sarcastic jargon bore little or no relation to the oratory quoted in *Touch The Earth*. Moreover, young female reporters tend to think of themselves as the advance guard of the feminine liberation movement, and Means's unabashed male chauvinism is blatantly obvious to anyone who has spent ten minutes in his company. Banks's good-luck beret with its *Playboy* bunny patch spelled things out even more clearly."

And Sacheen's patron himself, Marlon Brando, as Carlo Fiore's *Bud: The Brando I Knew* (1974), p. 207, boasts, is "the ultimate male chauvinist pig." The book's jacket describes Fiore as "Marlon's confidant, critic, employer, go-fer, co-author, procurer, stand-in, and dialogue coach", leading Mel Gussow of the *New York Times* to comment (10 April 1974):

> "He served in all those capacities, with emphasis particularly on his role as procurer. Often Fiore would take a new female conquest of his to Brando's place and the actor would bed her (usually with Fiore's silent consent)—although it is clear that Brando found many women on his own."

The demise of the prairie buffalo had not interfered in the least, it appears, with the hunting style of Big Chief Brando.

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this award to all the cowboys shot in John Ford Westerns. . . ."

Nor was this all. The droll logic of Brando's Hollywood hip tribalism was irresistible. Ginbutt of the *Daily Telegraph* in London drew a cartoon of two Indians conferring outside a tepee with the caption: "*We Indians always get the dirty jobs . . . like being sent to reject the white man's Oscar.*" New York's Secretary of State, John P. Lomenzo (who heads an Italian-American organisation called the Columbian Coalition), demanded in a letter to Brando that he explain how the star of a film like *The Godfather*, so defamatory of the Italian-American community, could have the nerve to criticise Hollywood's depiction of Indians. And such critics of Brando's dualistic racial sensibilities were soon joined by others who chided him for his persistence at last season's favourite cocktail-party fad of *radical chic*. Charles Champlin, the entertainment editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, sniffed:

> "Brando is right, of course, that the Oscars and all their attendant splendors are trivial when measured against the abrasive realities of hunger, poverty, and the other legacies of Indian history, and this is doubtless even clearer seen from the perspective of Tahiti. . . ."[21]

The iconoclastic William F. Buckley Jr., sensing an easy target, intoned: "Marlon Brando bears the moroseness of the human race heavily on his shoulders. It is a lucky accident of nature that in the past he has been laconic not only on the screen but off it. One wonders whether he is now casting off his inhibitions, even as he did his pants in his last movie [*Last Tango in Paris*], resolving to become Mr Jane Fonda. . . ." And Oglala Sioux tribal president Richard Wilson, responding with less literary grace but perfect clarity to an announcement that Brando was now *en route* to join the AIM militants at the Pine Ridge Reservation, declared to newsmen: "If he is in sympathy with those renegades and hoodlums at Wounded Knee, he can get back on his damned white horse and we will clear him off the reservation. . . ."

But Brando, a regular commuter between his Santa Monica mountain-hideaway villa and his Tahitian estate at Tetioroa,[22] was unrepentant. Appearing on the Dick Cavett TV show on 1 June, unshaven and wearing blue denims in the received manner of the guilt-ridden privileged, he denounced "what Hollywood has done to the Indians and to all minority groups."[23] "Right here on this network", he was emphatic, "nearly every night, one can see silly renditions of human behaviour—the wily Japanese, the savage Indian, the idiot Black."[24] For Brando, the theatre of counter-culture politics at Wounded Knee was a healthy antidote to the prevailing American political theatre of racialist stereotyping. But his attempt to cast himself in leading roles in both companies, as was clear in the light of the Academy Awards fiasco, pleased few. Predictably, his performance had been panned by the critics.

At Wounded Knee, where the occupation was now a month old, a serious split was developing among the militants. When Russell Means and Dennis Banks temporarily departed from the village (reportedly aboard a mysterious aircraft with Canadian markings), a group of some 100 of the occupiers led by Pedro Bissonette and Leonard Crow Dog—they called themselves the "Independent Oglala Sioux Nation"—offered to surrender in exchange for new tribal elections, an investigation of tribal accounts, and a Government guarantee that they could leave the hamlet unmolested. Before Federal negotiators could respond to the proposal, Means and Banks had returned, and with the help of some 60 armed AIM supporters, put pressure on the others to come back into line.

Now they were faced with the prospect of a continued erosion of their support within the occupied village. A reporter's estimate of 6 April claimed that the rebel force within Wounded

[21] Charles Champlin, "An Offer Brando Could Refuse", a column in the *Los Angeles Times* (reprinted in the *Vancouver Sun*, 14 April 1973).

[22] It was reported (in October 1973) that Brando was being sued for the alleged mistreatment of 30 Tahitian workers hired to work at Tetioroa and subsequently (they claimed) sacked without notice or compensation, demonstrating, one supposes, that charity begins at home.

[23] Brando's concern was shared by the "Advocacy/Survival of American Indian Movement." Protesting the *premiere* of John Wayne's latest movie "*Cahill: United States Marshal*" in Seattle, spokesmen denounced Governor Dan Evans for proclaiming 10–16 June "John Wayne Week" in the state. "The Duke's" anti-Indian Westerns, it was argued, made him "the Nation's No. 1 Indian-killer."

[24] He might have added: the temperamental movie star. Brando's arm was later seen in bandages. He suggested that he had picked up an infection in his right hand when he went to Chinatown with show-host Dick Cavett after the programme. Actually he took a swing at free-lance photographer Ron Galella, causing a cut on Galella's lip that required nine stitches to close, and damaged his own hand.

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Knee had dwindled by that date from a high of around 300 to about 40 or 50 gun-carrying militants. AIM leaders responded by adopting what appeared to be a more conciliatory stance. Russell Means agreed to turn himself in to Federal marshals as part of an agreement under which (accompanied by a group of traditional chiefs and head men of the Teton Sioux) he would be taken to Washington to confer with White House officials. One central feature of the plan, insisted on by the Justice Department, was that the Wounded Knee occupants were to lay down their arms as soon as talks began in Washington. But no sooner had he arrived in the capital than Means, displaying anew his predilection for publicity, announced a different interpretation of the accord. It was as if, sensing the declining dramatic appeal of the Wounded Knee occupation as its run dragged on interminably, the AIM leadership was determined to revive the flagging interest of the theatre-going public by shifting the spotlight away from the historic hamlet to a new national stage. On his arrival at Dulles Airport he stated: "The Federal Government has duped the press and the world again." Means announced that only after he was satisfied that Federal officials had proved that they were negotiating "in good faith" would he telephone his supporters still entrenched at Wounded Knee and give them the signal to lay down their arms. He charged that Assistant Attorney-General Kent Frizzell (who on behalf of the U.S. signed the "treaty" which set up Means' trip to Washington) was "a man gone mad with power." He claimed that the Justice Department had "run amok at Wounded Knee" where it threatened at any moment to "swoosh down on the occupants." In a telephone exchange with Means, Frizzell denied the charges angrily and categorically. White House spokesman Leonard Garment reluctantly announced that there could be no Washington talks "while guns are being pointed at Federal marshals."

From Wounded Knee, Dennis Banks retorted by way of orchestrating Means' position: "Our reaction in the camp is that we totally reject the agreement signed now because the government has violated every paragraph of the agreement." Another stalemate had been reached as the mock-serious diplomatic game dragged on. Two days later Means called a press conference in Washington (shortly before he was to appear before the House subcommittee on Indian Affairs); he threatened to hold Wounded Knee for the rest of his life if the White House would not hold talks. Was anybody still listening? In New York the next day he told reporters that as the White House "has closed its doors" he was returning to Wounded Knee "to secure our borders."[25] A Government spokesman confirmed that the two sides had now arrived at "an impasse on an impasse."

THEN, ON THE 50TH DAY of the occupation, the war of words at Wounded Knee gave way to real-life tragedy. A fierce outburst of firepower took place in which an estimated 4,000 rounds of ammunition were exchanged between AIM holdouts and Federal officers. An Indian was shot in the head and died a week later in a Rapid City hospital without ever regaining consciousness. He was identified as Frank Clearwater, 47, an Apache Indian from Cherokee, North Carolina, who had apparently been one of a number of Indian and white sympathisers from outside the Pine Ridge Reservation who had sporadically slipped through the lines of Federal perimeter forces to join the insurgents in the village. He was the first of two fatalities at

[25] "Closeout", *AP* (11 April 1973). Whose "borders"? *Facts On File* reported (14 April) that spokesmen for the permanent residents of Wounded Knee had announced they "would give the Federal agents three weeks to clear the town [of AIM militants] or take action themselves." All but 10 of the hamlet's 200 permanent inhabitants had left on the advice of a court order. Now they were demanding that the government pay "each displaced family $100-a-day retroactive to the start of the occupation 27 February for damages and losses. . . ." That same day the regular residents, led by tribal president Richard Wilson, set up their own roadblock and vowed not to let food or medical supplies pass into the hands of the insurgents in the village as a means of bringing the confrontation to an end ("Indians Now Opposing Indians", *UPI*, 14 April 1973). Actually, the roadblock amounted to a reinstatement of one set up earlier by Wilson and his supporters (on 26 March, the day of the shooting of U.S. Marshal Grimm) when the moderates vowed to "starve out" the AIM group.

Thus, there were during much of the occupation no fewer than three roadblocks at Wounded Knee, manned by the Federal forces, the AIM, and the moderate Indians regularly resident in the village. It was this latter roadblock which was periodically torn down by the Federal marshals, only to be set up time and again by the moderates.

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Wounded Knee.[26] In a similar eruption of heavy gunfire on 27 April a second "warrior", 31-year-old Lawrence Lamont, was killed. Ironically enough, he was the son of a BIA employee, and the brother-in-law of the secretary of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council which had opposed the occupation from the outset.

Predictably, AIM interpreted this senseless loss of life, as Russell Means put it melodramatically in an address before Cleveland's City Club, as the beginnings of a "war of attrition" begun by the Federal forces. His colleague Clyde Bellecourt saw the shootings as an object lesson in why the militants must not lay down their guns, claiming that then Attorney-General Richard Kleindienst had a "secret, two-point plan on his desk" under which an incident would be staged once the Indians had surrendered their weapons so that they could be attacked—and wiped out. But by now, in light of the tragic casualties and the apparent inconclusiveness of the Wounded Knee occupation, the regular patrons of America's political theatre were beginning to lose interest in AIM's admitted ingenuity in devising new twists in their Wounded Knee story line. Indeed, they were even leaving in large numbers from the stalls.

THE DEADLOCK AT WOUNDED KNEE was finally broken in early May. In response to a White House letter sent by Leonard Garment, terms of agreement were finally reached. Indians subject to arrest were to surrender at the Federal barricades and others were to be escorted off the reservation; in return for this the Federal government promised to hold meetings with designated representatives of the Indians to explore possible avenues of stepped-up reform of Indian Affairs. In contrast to the theatrical atmosphere of the early days of the occupation—when government representatives and AIM leaders met in a tepee and smoked a peace pipe for the benefit of the cameramen—there was now not even a face-to-face meeting of the two sides. Richard Hellstern of the Justice Department, Kent Frizzell of Interior, and Chief of U.S. Marshals Wayne Colburn signed for the Federal government on Saturday 5 May. The next day AIM counsel Ramon Roubideaux carried the documents into the occupied village where AIM leader Leonard Crow Dog, five traditional chiefs of the Teton and Sioux, and five Oglala Sioux (who sided with AIM against the Tribal Council) signed for the occupiers.

Conspicuous by their absence were the signatures of Russell Means and Dennis Banks. Means was arrested in Los Angeles on 28 April after his $25,000 bond had been revoked in Deadwood, South Dakota. Earlier, in a manoeuvre reminiscent of the Angela Davis case in Marin County, California, Means had pleaded innocent to charges brought against him in the Wounded Knee occupation, and asked that his trial be held outside South Dakota. "Because of the frontier mentality displayed by residents of this state", he said, "we don't feel we can get a fair trial in South Dakota—or in Nebraska or North Dakota for that matter. . . ." At the time of his arrest Means said he had conferred with Marlon Brando the day before, and that the actor had assured him of his financial aid in any legal proceedings against him. As for Dennis Banks, he had slipped away from Wounded Knee[27] sometime before the final deadline under the May agreement. He eluded arrest for six weeks, finally turning himself in to authorities in late June to face charges arising from his part in the Second Battle of Wounded Knee.

AIM HAD HELD THE HISTORIC HAMLET for 71 days. It provided a stark contrast to the terrible swiftness with which events had transpired in that same place when, in the brittle cold of a December morning in 1890, violent death came to over 200 Indians and 25 cavalrymen in a clash which rendered the very name of Wounded Knee an historical symbol of shame. Now, looking back over the long and bizarre confrontation between Government agents and the AIM, Chief U.S.

[26] Earl Flowers, " 'Second Battle of Wounded Knee' Claims Life", *UPI* (26 April 1973). According to the *New York Times*, the fierce outbreak of shooting that led up to the Clearwater fatality came "shortly after three light planes dropped seven packages into the village by parachute. The packages were said by a newspaper reporter aboard one of the planes to have contained food. . . ." The timing of the shoot-out so shortly after the air drop, however, "concerned" the Government (according to Assistant Attorney-General Stanley Pottinger). But *Boston Globe* reporter Tom Oliphant, who was a passenger in one of the planes which had been arranged by "anti-war activists", denied that any weapons or ammunition had been involved. At any rate, the Justice Department later stopped its investigation of the matter for "lack of sufficient evidence."

[27] Andrew H. Malcolm of the *New York Times* suggested that Banks was hardly the only one to have done so, observing (on 9 May) that "Dozens of others eluded Federal perimeter patrols and escaped, apparently with a quantity of arms."

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Marshal Wayne Colburn (whose men had been under orders not to fire their weapons until fired upon) felt that "the way we handled it was successful . . . I don't believe we could ask for a better solution than we have." But the assessment of Assistant U.S. Attorney-General Richard Hellstern who, like Colburn, was an on-the-spot participant in the attempt to resolve the issues surrounding the occupation, was less sanguine. "If I were in control in the future", he said bluntly, "I'd treat them the same as bank robbers and plane hijackers. . . ."

As the regular residents of Wounded Knee trickled back into the village, some of them found much to sympathise with in Hellstern's point of view. The trading post was gutted. The charming white-framed church where the militants first set up their headquarters in the night of 27 February had been burned to the ground (in a mysterious fire that broke out on the evening of Independence Day). As the *New York Times* reported, the damage at Wounded Knee "was so great and the personal shock so stunning that almost as quickly as the unbelieving residents saw what was gone they vowed to leave . . . the battered village seemed well on the way to becoming a ghost town." The Government set its expenses incurred over the occupation at five million dollars. And beyond mere material considerations, the intra-Indian struggle between AIM (and its allies among the traditional tribal elders) and the elected council of Richard Wilson left open wounds that would not be soon in healing.

Just as the earlier Trail of Broken Treaties caravan had seemed to some "a holiday, and a great adventure", so too many of the Wounded Knee occupiers seemed in retrospect to view the whole thing as a lark. A widely distributed AP Wirephoto of AIM supporters being bussed out of the village at the end of the affair gave prominent display to one grinning occupier, his right arm protruding out of the window in a defiant clenched-fist gesture. It was all of a piece with earlier photographs of fellow Wounded Knee "warriors", hot-rodding it around the hamlet in shopping carts, or atop motorised lawnmowers.

Now, as quickly as they had descended on the place they were gone, back to jail or back home to the big cities from which most of them had come. Toby Eagle Bull, an old tribal leader of the Oglala Sioux, pointed out in an appearance before the U.S. House of Representative's Indian Affairs sub-committee that all the militants had really accomplished was to close the schools and to bring financial hardship to the local residents.[28] "Why did this bunch pick Wounded Knee?" he asked, as the curtain fell on the final act of the Second Battle of Wounded Knee. Eagle Bull noted AIM's supporters were mostly from elsewhere—and that many of them were not even Indians. He answered his own question with as much insight as is ever likely to be uttered about the occupation and its aftermath. "I suppose because it is a well-known name", he reflected. "Everybody knows what happened there in 1890. . . ."

(A brief "Epilogue" in the next ENCOUNTER *will conclude this series.)*

[28] "Indian Blasts AIM For Wounded Knee", *AP* (9 April 1973).

Illumination

Scrounging for fallen boughs in the plantation,
I kicked a rotten log out of the rut
Where storms had left it. At once the underside
Became a scare, a crush of jostling things
Tossed to the light, craving the darkness lost.

Stillness returned, and all around the tact
of filtering sunbeams. Delicate reproach
Breathed in the silence. With the grace it shone
Of skies in a cloud's wake, sunlight in wait
And woods turning slowly into the dawn.

Frank Ormsby

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Column

GEORGE ORWELL'S last novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, never had the immense success of *Animal Farm*, which by now has established itself as one of those rare books which, like *Gulliver's Travels* or *Robinson Crusoe*, can be read by children and adults alike, and in all countries and every language (except, of course, those states where publishing or even reading it would constitute a criminal offence). It is not difficult to see why *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has not achieved the same status. Though both books are fantasies, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has none of that universal, fairy-tale quality which recommends *Animal Farm* to such a wide variety of readers, and in some cases conceals its message from them. Though one of the most savage, and most effective political polemics ever written, it has a timeless, folk-lore element about it, so that anyone might interpret it according to his own fancies or prejudices, or even, like children, without any prejudice at all. Odd as it may seem now, when it was first published there were critics who praised it as a satire on National Socialism; but this may have been partly because at that time it would have been embarrassing to reveal the real villain of the piece.

Nineteen Eighty-Four has none of these qualities, and it would be quite impossible for even the most obtuse of readers to regard it as some delectable folk-tale designed to while away a sunny summer afternoon. Its pessimism about the future is almost unrelieved by any ray of hope, and besides, its incidental details make it only too clear that it is located, not in some Never-never-land, but in the real world, even if that world had been projected into a future which, in 1949, when the book was published, might seem safely distant but today appears uncomfortably close.

Yet, despite its relative lack of success, it seems likely that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* contains more of the undiluted essence of Orwell than its more famous predecessor, and was in a way the expression of all the ideas and experiences of his lifetime. And indeed, it is possible that it has more to say to us today than *Animal Farm*; for after all we now know that *Animal Farm* was an allegory for something which is demonstrably and factually true. It still remains to be seen how much truth there is in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, though one already has an uneasy feeling that, as a prediction of the future it will not prove totally false and, even if it does, it will only be because we have taken it as a warning of what may, but need not, happen.

Yet *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as well as being a book about the future, is also a book about the past, in the sense that it is the product of ideas which had been in circulation long before Orwell wrote his book. They had been, as it were, in the air for at least as long as half-a-century, and some of them much longer, and had become part and parcel of men's hopes and fears about the future. Some of them Orwell took in almost unconsciously as an element in the general intellectual climate of his time; others were the hard-won product of long thought and reflection, and Orwell had already done much, as a journalist and as a novelist, to bring them to public attention before he came to write his last book, which perhaps one might regard as his final word on questions which in one form or another had occupied him all his life.

ALL THIS BECOMES VERY CLEAR in reading Professor William Steinhoff's *George Orwell and the Origins of Nineteen Eighty-Four*.[1] Indeed, in tracing the literary sources of Orwell's novel, Professor Steinhoff sometimes has to rely on conjecture and probability rather more than on proof. There is no direct evidence (or at least Professor Steinhoff does not quote any) that, for instance, Orwell was influenced by H. G. Wells' story, *The Island of Dr Moreau*, though there is every likelihood that he read it, and the resemblances to his own novel are indeed striking. One has the feeling that what Professor Steinhoff is tracing is not so much origins as similarities between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and a host of other books that preceded it in the previous fifty years or so; and that what these similarities show is not so much the direct influence of such books on Orwell as their common origin in what one can only call the Spirit of the Age, or at least a certain element in it which looked forward to the future with strangely mingled feelings of hope and apprehension, with an only half-conscious suspicion that among its many blessings it might bring certain things which might be very unpleasant indeed but perhaps most of all with the certainty that, in ways which writers struggled and groped to define, it would turn out to be profoundly and perhaps catastrophically different from anything which mankind had previously experienced.

Often such feelings found political expression by identifying themselves with the cause of socialism, and revolution, as the only means of averting the disaster which lay ahead. Yet at the

[1] *George Orwell and the Origins of Nineteen Eighty-Four*. By WILLIAM STEINHOFF. University of Michigan Press, $12.50, £6.25

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same time there was an uneasy sense that socialism, and its handmaid, scientific reason, might prove to be the progenitor of the nightmare which haunted men's dreams, might indeed be the midwife which brought into the world the kind of tyranny described by Hilaire Belloc in *The Servile State*. The most horrific, and certainly the most widely read, of such fantasies of doom was Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, in which this curious and ambivalent relationship between socialism and tyranny found explicit expression:

> Out of the decay of self-seeking capitalism, it was held, would arise that flower of the ages, the Brotherhood of Man. Instead of which, appalling alike to us who look back and to those that lived at the time, capitalism, rotten-ripe, sent forth that monstrous offshoot, the Oligarchy.

Professor Steinhoff has no difficulty in showing that Orwell, as a young man, was deeply affected by the kind of ideas expressed in *The Servile State* and, especially, *The Iron Heel*; but sometimes he has a tendency to write as if Orwell were exceptional in this respect. The truth is rather that such ideas were already shared by thousands of others before and during his lifetime. Today I find it curious to remember that so many of the books which Professor Steinhoff quotes because of their influence on Orwell—*The Servile State*; *The Iron Heel*; Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*; certain of Kipling's stories; *The Island of Dr Moreau*—were all to be found on my father's book-shelves at home, and were all eagerly devoured by me as a schoolboy.

LATER, OF COURSE, THERE WERE other books which contributed to the nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Boris Souvarine's significantly named *Cauchemar en U.R.S.S.*, Julia de Beausobre's *The Woman Who Could Not Die*. They tended to give a concrete reality to what had previously been fantasy, and to confirm the conclusion drawn from his experiences in Spain that as a blueprint of the future the Soviet Union was as much, or more, to be feared as the dictatorships of the Right. They gave strength to the feeling expressed in his famous, or notorious, comment that

> The sin of nearly all left-wingers from 1933 onwards is that they wanted to be anti-Fascist without being anti-totalitarian.

It is a sin of which many remain guilty; we have only to listen to Mr Clive Jenkins to realise it.

Professor Steinhoff goes to particular pains to refute Isaac Deutscher's accusation that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was nothing but a slavish imitation, lacking all claim to originality, of the early Soviet novel, *We*, by Yevgeny Zamyatin, and to emphasise everything that differentiates them as a vision of the future. I cannot help thinking that he is right in this. He himself gives pride of place, as an influence on Orwell's novel, to a very different kind of book, James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution*, published in 1941, and its sequel, *The Machiavellians*. Curiously enough, these two books, of which the first especially enjoyed a considerable vogue during World War II, have a less permanent literary or intellectual value than almost any which Professor Steinhoff quotes as influences on Orwell. I doubt if anyone reads them today except, like Professor Steinhoff, for historical reasons. Even the works of James Hadley Chase, whom Professor Steinhoff also includes among those who influenced Orwell, have probably stood up better to the test of time than Burnham's. But it isn't the best books which necessarily influence us most. In bad books one finds what one is looking for, especially if they are things which are not to be found in the best ones; and, in Burnham, Orwell found as it were a scenario which fitted in ideally with his own preoccupations.

ORWELL DISCUSSED and reviewed both *The Managerial Revolution*, and *The Machiavellians* on several occasions and in different contexts; at first, as a Socialist, to emphasise his disagreement with them, but later to make a somewhat reluctant admission that Burnham may after all have been right.

Burnham's main thesis in *The Managerial Revolution* (which has as a sub-title, "What is Happening in the World") was that the time had passed for the kind of revolution such as Orwell believed in, which is based upon the revolt of the exploited masses against their capitalist oppressors. For power had already passed from the hands of the capitalists, defined as the owners of the means of production, into those of a new class, the managerial élite, whose position was based, not on ownership, but on the specialist knowledge and skills required for the direction of the economy in an age in which science and technology have become the prime sources of innovation and expansion. This was true both in the so-called "capitalist" and the so-called "socialist" states. In both the actual direction of the economy was in the hands of managerial élites which grew increasingly to resemble one another, because they were motivated by the same interests. Their ideological differences were a matter of form only, designed primarily to deceive the masses into a willing subjection. In their actual modes of operation, and the use they made of their power, Soviet Commissar and

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Capitalist Managing Director are brothers under the ideological skin.

This change in the economic and social structure was accompanied by a change in the objectives of those who controlled it. Whereas the motive force of the capitalist system was profit, and the motive force of socialist revolution was the Brotherhood of Man, the motive force of the managerial class was power, their own power, and the privileges which go with it. Here Burnham detected a contradiction, in the same way as Marx detected contradictions in the capitalist system. For the power of the managerial class is based on scientific reason, which tends to promote the growth of a single world economic and political system, in which science and technology will reign supreme. On the other hand, the interests of a particular managerial élite demand the strengthening and stabilisation of its own power within the geographical area which it controls, and wherever possible its expansion beyond it. From this Burnham drew the conclusion that the future belonged to a few Super-States, each exercising absolute power within its own territory and each engaged in an attempt to extend its own power at the expense of the others. The consequences of the Managerial Revolution would be a condition of permanent war, either open or concealed, between the Super-States. Nor would this necessarily be against the interests of the managerial class, because war by its very nature would tend to promote their absolute power within their own territory, as a result both of the total mobilisation of the means of production and of the total demoralisation of the masses.

It wasn't a bad guess in 1941, and Orwell took over a large part of Burnham's scenario when he created the horrible state of Oceania in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is important to realise that Oceania is horrible because it excludes everything in which Orwell himself believed, including such old-fashioned concepts as honour, courage, common sense, and above all what he liked to call *decency*, a quality which he tended to identify with the habits, manners and traditional modes of life of the working class. This quality has been lost in Oceania because, under the rule of the managers, the workers are no longer workers but have been turned into slaves.

★

As 1984 COMES NEARER, it is reasonable to ask how far Orwell's, or Burnham's, predictions have proved to be true. Certainly Burnham's reputation as an oracle was seriously damaged, and his vogue as a prophet quickly over, because some of his immediate forecasts turned out to be very wide of the mark. He tipped the wrong horses. This was largely because he did not, and could not, take into account the discovery of the atomic bomb; and when that secret was revealed, he joined those who advocated its use by the United States before its monopoly was broken by the Soviet Union.

In this, of course, he shared a weakness from which all futurology suffers. The principle of serendipity applies; and besides, one never knows whether foreknowledge of the future will not protect men against the worst consequences of their actions. But it would not be difficult to produce a revised version of Burnham's scenario which would take account of the hydrogen bomb and the restraints it imposes on the foreign and military policies of the Super Powers. In such a state of affairs, the Super Powers would refrain from direct aggression against each other and confine their belligerent activities to geographical areas in which they themselves did not suffer direct material damage but might achieve an extension, or prevent a diminution, of their power.

This, in fact, or something very like it, is the condition in which we live now, even if it goes by the name of *détente*; and, while Dr Kissinger goes whizzing round the world, in Cambodia, in Viet Nam, in the Middle East, the Super Powers vicariously continue their undeclared war. And what are his visits, or Mr Shelepin's, but reconnaissance sallies to a fringe area which has still not quite decided where its future lies and may still be influenced in its choice? Dr Kissinger backs the Freeman of the City of Cardiff; Mr Shelepin goes for Jack Jones.

In such a continuing struggle, morality, or what Orwell called decency, has no part, and in this sense Burnham was right to claim (as he did in *The Machiavellians*) that it would be decided by naked considerations of power, though they would be concealed by face-saving formulae by which war was made to look like peace. Such formulae, however, are strictly for the masses and have no part in the calculations and war games of their masters.

In this respect, Orwell disagreed with Burnham. He did not accept that the will to power, unrestricted by any other considerations, is the sole motive force of history, even in the age of the Super Powers. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is less a prediction than a warning of what is to be expected if in fact morality is excluded from politics. But one might conclude, as perhaps Orwell himself did at the end of his life, that already the game is up, that 1984 is no longer a matter for the future but is already with us here and now, even if its worst implications have not yet been fully realised.

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BUT IF TO THIS EXTENT 1984 no longer belongs to the future but the present, what kind of vision or fantasy will take its place? Who, in the present generation, will play the part which Burnham played for Orwell, providing a kind of blueprint in which he could embody all his fears and hopes and premonitions?

There is, to be sure, no lack of candidates for such a role. The steps of Delphi are thronged with eager applicants for the post of oracle. In think-tanks all over the world futurologists are pressing their blueprints upon us, and from universities books like *The Greening of America* find a huge audience eager to be reassured that it is not the Apocalypse but Utopia which is at hand. But no one has come up with anything very convincing as yet. The difficulty is that Utopia tends to look so like the Apocalypse, and already Newspeak and Doublethink are so firmly established that the oracle can in all sincerity assure us that Cruelty is simply the mask of Love, and Violence the Peace that passeth all understanding.

Perhaps, if today we wish to see what men and women actually think, hope, or fear the future is going to look like, it is not to the accepted oracles we should look, but somewhere even lower down on the intellectual plane, to television features, especially children's programmes, for children already really are the future; to popular science fiction and underground newsprints and astrological columns in the popular press. If one examines this vast mass of evidence, one comes away with an image, very vivid but slightly blurred at the edges, of a total acceptance of the infallibility of science combined with an equally total acceptance of the primacy of the irrational in human affairs.

The man of the future is not Big Brother but a combination of the Pop Star and Dr Who: Pop Star screaming and gesticulating in the kaleidoscopic lights on the stage, Dr Who quietly fiddling away with the complicated electronic equipment which gives his voice power and his shape vitality. But what if Big Brother is also waiting in the wings? It would make an irresistible combo. *R*

Prodigal

It is the third hour
of drinking;
I have not begun
the dry ride
to the tidied suburbs.

I cannot remember
where I left them
or what we did;
it is not important.

Space begins
where the sodium
hides its flying god,
and every bridge chooses
the river in my direction:
I am a backyard pigeon
swimming home.

In the dark arches
two men are kissing
with their shoes in dirt;
three fish stare
from the cobbles
with mucous eyes;
I had forgotten
this river ends
at the sea.

Later the wind will rise
and leaving the thieves behind
I will see the tree fixed
in a flying sky;

then, it is sudden,
a moment of no noise,
the edge of a moment,
opening somewhere:
choice,
and it is gone.

Through forty years
my father's voice is
whispering, and
the red patches
are itching
all over me.

Edwin Brock

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THEATRE

The Mystery of Heartbreak House

By John Weightman

OVER THE YEARS, in the course of that strange occupation called teaching (in which, at best, one slowly instructs oneself, without ever being sure that one is anything more than a minor irritant for younger and younger generations), I have often blithely asserted that there are three outstanding plays which symbolise the imminent or effective collapse of a civilisation: *The Marriage of Figaro, The Cherry Orchard,* and *Heartbreak House*. This makes a nice pattern: the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and Western Europe during the First World War. But now, having had to reflect again on *Heartbreak House* through seeing John Schlesinger's excellent production at the Old Vic, I realise, to my professorial dismay, that the generalisation is more than doubtful and that I was perhaps misled by Shaw's preface into reading the play too easily as a prophetic or minatory work on the same level as the other two, when in fact it is something different.

Shaw himself makes an explicit comparison with Chekhov in the opening pages. He subtitles the play "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes", and he says: "*Heartbreak House* is not merely the name of the play which follows this preface. It is cultured, leisured Europe before the war." He appears, then, to be much more conscious of what he was doing than either Beaumarchais or Chekhov were. He is manipulating his symbols openly and, as one reads the play, one tends to take it for granted that the great Shavian intelligence is at work arranging the details. Moreover, it has often been called his best play, and Shaw himself was inclined to agree with the people who said this, except, of course, when he was remarking that "*Back to Methuselah* is a world masterpiece or nothing."

I had never seen the play performed before, and my main impression as it unfolded on the stage was of its astonishingly non-rational, inconsequential character, which is much more extreme than the inconsequentiality of Chekhov. In fact, Chekhov is always perfectly understandable. He may not have known that he was composing the dirge of Old Russia, but all the elements of *The Cherry Orchard*, including the "quaint" characters, such as the sweet-eating uncle and the gherkin-eating German governess, fit accurately into the psychological and dramatic structure. One feels that they are right while one is watching the play, and it is easy to think up explanations for them afterwards. Besides, the arrival and departure, the abandonment of the estate and the take-over by Lopakhin provide a firm symbolic framework.

BUT WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE of *Heartbreak House*? The house itself is an eccentric dwelling, architecturally reminiscent of a ship: the Ship of State? the Ship of Humanity journeying into the future? Any house perhaps, including this commodious residence in the home counties, is a sort of Noah's Ark afloat on the ocean of time and waiting to land on the Mount Ararat of some metaphysical explanation. Could it be to some extent a projection of Shaw's Corner at Ayot St Lawrence? According to Shaw's secretary, Blanche Patch, the explosion in the last act was suggested by a bomb which went off within earshot of that rather conventional country villa. At any rate, the house in the play is unlike the castle of Acquas Frescas in *The Marriage of Figaro* or Mme Ranevskaya's house in *The Cherry Orchard*, which are both real at the same time as they are symbolic. *Heartbreak House* has undeniably something surrealist about it.

And are the people who inhabit it, or wander into it, representative types of the doomed England or doomed Europe, as Count Almaviva or Mme Ranevskaya are representative of France and Russia? The master of the house is an old sea-captain, who is at the same time an inventor and a seeker after intellectual insight (the seventh degree of concentration). He has two daughters, one of whom is a feminist *femme fatale* (Hesione) and the other the realistic wife of an imperial

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administrator (Ariadne). But they are really the same man-eating type, although one has reduced her husband to the status of a living dildo while the other officially supports her husband in his imperial mission and subjugates her brother-in-law instead. The guests are Ellie, a young girl wondering what to do with her life; her father, Mazzini Dunn, a well-meaning cog in the economic machine; and Mangan, a captain of industry but in reality a giant with feet of clay. Comic relief is provided by an old nurse-cum-servant and a crooked burglar, who turns burglary itself into a disguised form of begging. Are these adequate to represent either England in the penultimate phase of its imperial hegemony or Europe before the collapse of the pre-1914 structure? It would hardly seem so.

A FURTHER COMPLICATION is introduced by the fact that some characters have apparently "significant" names, while others have neutral ones. Why Captain Shotover? Could it be a Gallic pun? His shot is over. *Il a tiré son coup*; he is finished, almost as good as dead. Anna Massey, as Ariadne, Lady Utterword, certainly uttered words; she is the most impressive *belle laide* I ever remember seeing and her thrilling stage presence made every syllable count. But are we supposed to believe in the words or to take them as an expression of false certainty? Dunn, the moderate liberal, and Dunn, the shabby burglar, are synonymous in being both dun-coloured, in other words lamentably dull and non-Nietzschean and, therefore, deserving only of condescending pity. Hector Hushabye is a hushaby baby, a boyish phallus without an adult mind, and so he cannot see when the bough is about to break. But why is the nurse called Guinness and the captain-of-industry Mangan? Should they, too, not have meaningful appellations?

Still more curious is the relative absence of any plot or dramatic progression. A slight thread of continuity is provided by Ellie's infatuation, then disillusionment, with Hector, her debate with herself and others about whether or not she should marry Mangan, and her final platonic communion with Shotover. But this does not seem to be connected with the general breakdown in civilisation. She doesn't reject Mangan because of his ill-gotten wealth, but because he is a woefully unsatisfactory person. Her attitude doesn't amount, then, to a symbolic rejection of capitalism, since Mangan is a poor representative of the system.

IN HIS PREFACE, Shaw makes great play with the opposition between Heartbreak House the cultured, leisured class (presumably Hesione and Hector) and Horseback Hall, the philistine, non-neurotic administrators (represented by Ariadne and her absent husband, whom she constantly quotes); and he implies that between them they are allowing civilisation to perish, but he doesn't actually illustrate the point in the play. The characters wander in and out, uttering *mots d'auteur* about human nature, the world at large or England in particular, without the untidiness of the household being properly representative of any broader community. Then the bomb drops from a serene sky and kills the burglar and the capitalist, as if war automatically eliminated law-breakers and profiteers, which is far from being the case. Although hostilities are not in progress, the other characters show no surprise at the event. With extraordinary *Schadenfreude*, the women even long for the bombers to return. It is almost as if Shaw were implying that the war had not done enough damage, since it had not completely cleared away the muddle of Heartbreak House.

IN AN INTERVIEW, Mr John Schlesinger, no doubt taking a leaf out of Margery M. Morgan's book about Shaw, *The Shavian Playground* (1972), has said that "*Heartbreak House* is, of course, Shaw's dream play." But a dream, to be significant, must have a system, and Mr Schlesinger doesn't suggest any, remaining content with a poetic arrangement of the "nocturnal" details of the performance. Miss Morgan, for her part, devotes twenty pages to an attempt to make sense of the characterisation and the action, since she wants to refute a comment by Professor Robert Brustein to the effect that "the work seems peculiarly unplanned, as if it had been snatched from the top of the author's unconscious without much effort or organization. . . ." But I cannot follow Miss Morgan's explanation, which is as involved as the play itself and frequently appeals to "paradox" and "irony."

My reaction is nearer to Brustein's, except that I wonder whether the play has not been brought up from the depths, rather than snatched from the surface, of the author's unconscious. There is some uncertainty about how long he took to write it. Some authorities say three or four years, from 1913 to 1916 or 1917; others one year, from 1916 to 1917. It was not published until 1919, so he may have tinkered with it for a further two years. He claimed that he began it in 1913, in which case the initial impulse would have been prophetic, but no evidence has been found to confirm his statement. My guess is that it was not a prophecy, but a response to shock. I can only understand it on the assumption that it represents Shaw's deepest reaction to the war; and what he is conveying is not so much

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the collapse of a civilisation as the uncertainties of the Shavian metaphysic, when brought up against a great catastrophe.

SHAW NEVER TIRED of proclaiming that he believed in Creative Evolution and the Life Force, concepts which he said he got from Samuel Butler but which may owe more to Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, since Bergson's two key terms are *l'évolution créatrice* and *l'élan vital*, and Nietzsche launched the *Übermensch*. Like Bergson, Shaw couldn't tolerate the determinism implicit in the Darwinian theory of natural selection, and he wanted to retain a teleological purpose by postulating a Life Force driving through each individual and constituting that individual's soul. But whereas Bergson thought of the individual soul as a charge of *élan vital* coming from, and returning to, the transcendent reservoir of *élan vital* that can conveniently be called God, Shaw, who ignores the possibility of the transcendent, seems to have looked upon the soul as a temporary animation of matter contributing—if only the individual will align himself on the forward drive—to some august but unspecified ultimate goal.

This belief in the onward movement of the human species, a variety of the religion of progress, gives him his enormous gusto, which can be a great advantage when he is dealing with a particular theme, such as the rehabilitation of some oppressed individual as in *Pygmalion*, or standing local conventions on their heads, as he does in all his plays. But it makes him have an uncomfortable or impatient attitude in face of irreducible evil. He cannot contemplate it steadfastly and fit it into his system. He either has to suggest, (like Bergson, Leibniz, or all the other deistic apologists) that evil is a minor element in the wider teleological economy of the good; or, like Nietzsche, that both good and evil are inadequate human categories and that cosmic truth lies somewhere beyond them. This probably accounts for the apparent callousness or self-contradictory superficiality of many of his remarks, and his amoral admiration for great men and great paternalistic power, as in *Major Barbara*, which, when looked at from the point of view of the non-teleological (*i.e.* Absurdist) humanitarian democrat, is a shocking neo-Nietzschean, pre-Fascist play. However, one sometimes gets the impression that all the rush and bluster in Shaw was covering up a possibility of despair. Certainly Blanche Patch's modest and meticulous account of him conveys a sensation of inner bleakness, of *taedium vitae* trying not to recognise itself by straining to make use of every particle of time.

IT WILL BE OBVIOUS BY NOW what solution to the mystery I am about to propose. *Heartbreak House* only appears to be concerned with the specific cultural crisis of Europe or England. It is a dream in the sense that Shaw, being unable to deal directly with the enormous evil of the event, can only make his imaginative response by assembling a collection of his usual characters in a fairly dark and ominous atmosphere and putting them through a series of theatrical tricks, which follow on by association and cancel each other out. Each character in turn becomes, for a moment or two, the mouthpiece of the author to castigate the others, or the world at large, in a few pointed but ultimately incoherent aphorisms. The outrageous way in which coincidences are multiplied and situations automatically reversed shows that the characters are not really in an autonomous play but have come, as it were, from all Shaw's previous plays to dance a vain round inside the author's head. These are the types he has used to compose his world view: the bright, aggressive, well-meaning but ultimately hard-headed young girl; the great predatory-cum-protective females; the young fertilising males who are the mere drones of the Life Force; the half-shrewd, half-silly representatives of liberalism and big business; the comic lower-classes with their inverted morality; etc. They correspond much more to the pattern of Shaw's own sensibility than to total external reality and, while they have had their effectiveness in limited contexts, they make no ultimately satisfactory aesthetic design here. Shotover/Shaw is impatient with all of them and makes them jump through the hoops like a circus-master. Shaw, the author, seems to fill them at the end with a suicidal urge, as if the Life Force wanted to kill them all off, perhaps to start afresh with new material.

Beyond this point, of course, Shaw virtually gave up humanity as a bad job, too messy to contemplate in its traditional form. In *Back to Methuselah*, all life as we know it is compressed into a few years of childhood. Totally evolved man is represented by the sexless Ancients who live in solitude and reflect on numbers. In other words, his later "world masterpiece" solves the problem of heartbreak at a stroke by replacing society and its incurable load of evil with the impersonal utopia of mathematics.

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POETRY

Females of the Species

On 118 Lines of Semonides—By HUGH LLOYD-JONES

"The business of him that republishes an ancient book is to correct what is corrupt and to explain what is obscure." SAMUEL JOHNSON (1756)

IN THESE DAYS when the question of women's rights is the subject of debate, the reader may be curious about the earliest work of European literature to have women for its theme. The poem on women by Semonides of Amorgos has been neglected in English. It is an interesting document in the history of attitudes to women; it is equally relevant to the history of character-study; and it seems to me one of the most attractive, as it is one of the largest, remains of Greek archaic poetry that have come down to us.

The poem starts with descriptions of ten women, each standing for a type of woman. Seven are made out of animals—sow, vixen, bitch, ass, ferret, mare, monkey; two out of elements—earth and sea; and one out of a bee. All except the last are more or less unfavourably portrayed. That occupies the first ninety-three lines. Then the poet argues that women are the greatest curse that Zeus has sent to men. If a woman seems useful, that makes her all the more dangerous; it is hard for a married man to live happily or to escape poverty. If a husband tries to entertain a visitor, his wife finds a pretext for scolding and arms herself for battle. The wife who seems most respectable is the one who will soonest deceive her husband; and each husband blames everybody else's wife, but praises his own. Yes, women are the greatest curse; and now the poet embarks on a series of stories from myth designed to prove it. But soon after the beginning of this, the poem breaks off. . . .

HUGH LLOYD-JONES *is Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. His scholarly edition of Semonides' poem on women, with text, translation, and commentaries, will shortly appear in a handsome volume published by Duckworth (London) and Noyes Press (U.S.A.), which also features photographs of a series of remarkable sculptures by Marcelle Quinton inspired by a reading of the poem. Richard Willson has sketched the heads, which were recently on exhibition at the O'Hana Gallery in London.*

Iambic Poetry

THE HOMERIC POEMS are the product of a tradition that must have continued over many centuries; they are thought to have reached their final form during the 8th century before Christ. During the same century Hesiod wrote his account of the Greek gods, the *Theogony*, and also his didactic epic about farming, the *Works and Days*; the metre of both poems is the dactylic hexameter that was the traditional metre of epic poetry.

We have no poetry in other metres dating from before the 7th century. From that period we have fragments of the choral lyric of Alcman, perhaps a Lydian but resident at Sparta; and we have songs written for individual performance by Archilochus, a native of Paros but active in the colonisation of the rich island of Thasos. Some of these are written in the elegiac couplet, a dactylic metre closely connected with the hexameter; but others are written in a very different metre, the iambic trimeter, and others still are written in "epodic" metres which are a mixture of dactylic and iambic metres.

Ancient writers liked to name an "inventor" for each literary genre; but when they tell us that Semonides or Archilochus "invented" the poem called the iambus and the iambic metre, we do not have to take them seriously. Evidence assembled from the history of many different cultures indicates that in most of them, if not all, song existed at a very early date. We have a Greek specimen of songs sung at work by grinders at the mill. This cannot be very early, for it mentions Pittacus of Lesbos, who lived at the end of the 7th century; but songs of its type must have existed many centuries before. It simply happens that no such songs dating from before the 7th century have been preserved.

That some 7th century songs were preserved is due to the greatness of poets like Alcman and Archilochus, whose poems seemed so memorable that they were written down and transmitted to

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posterity. But did great poets like these write songs, and not epics, because a new growth of individualism had compelled them to choose a medium suited to the expression of their individual feelings? So we are often told, on insufficient evidence. The remains of ancient epic do not suggest a world in which individualism was at a discount. True, the personality of the epic poet was not obtruded; but when we consider the nature of the genre, that hardly seems surprising. The personality of an iambic poet, like Archilochus, on the other hand, at first glance seems everywhere in evidence. Again, when we consider the nature of the genre we have to reconsider that impression.

In many of Archilochus' poems the poet was not at all times the speaker; he might put words into the mouths of other characters. The famous lines that begin "I do not care for Gyges with all his gold" were spoken not by the poet but by a carpenter called Charon; and the recently published fragments have supplied additional proof that the speech of other characters is so often rendered that it is not safe to assume that the sentiments expressed in an isolated scrap of Archilochian verse are those of Archilochus himself.

Yet a number of Archilochus' poems are obviously the utterance of the poet. Often they are addressed to friends of his, like Pericles or that Glaucus whose actual tombstone has been found on Thasos; often they deal with events of the poet's life, such as the wars in which he fought or his ill-starred connection with the daughters of Lycambes. Here we seem to catch the personal accent of a highly individual voice.

But even here, caution is necessary. A song written for a particular occasion reflects the mood of that occasion; it will express the sentiments appropriate to that mood. Even when these sentiments are those sincerely held by the poet, a point we do not always have the opportunity of verifying, they may well fail to accord with other sentiments expressed, perhaps with equal sincerity, on a different occasion. Archilochus' poems, like all Greek poems of the period, contain much reflection about the life of men and its relation to the gods. This reflection is never irrelevant to its context, and much of the poetry that contains it is great poetry. But comparison with other authors shows that the outlook which it expresses is one common to most Greeks at that time and for long afterwards. Although we still have very little of Archilochus, we can get some notion of his greatness as a literary artist. About his biography and about his personality we know less than our predecessors, with less material, imagined that they knew fifty years ago.

The iambus was in iambic metre, either the trimeter or the tetrameter. Like the song in lyric metre, it was recited at the symposium, the drinking-party. The conventions of the occasion cannot have been without effect upon the conventions of the poems sung on it. Lyric or elegiac songs were accompanied on a musical instrument; iambics seem to have been delivered in recitative, *parakataloge*.

Elegiac and iambic poems are not as different in style and diction as has sometimes been imagined; Dover's careful examination has shown that the iambic poems owe hardly less to epic style and vocabulary than the elegiac. Yet I cannot accept that for Archilochus there was no generic difference between elegy and iambus; the latter uses words and mentions things which would not be appropriate to the more elevated poetical atmosphere in which the former moves. Elegy is used for a lament for dead friends, as in the poem to Pericles (fr. 13); the iambus is the place for the obscenities. The iambus can rise to high poetry, but it can also find a place for words and actions which no early writer mentions in elegiac verse. That is certainly true not only of the iambus of Archilochus, but of that of Semonides. The word ἴαμβος was connected with the word ἰάπτω meaning "to hurl"; it had the connotation of "pelting with abuse." The three iambic poets of the canon, Archilochus, Hipponax and Semonides, were all famous for abuse; according to Lucian, each had a particular favourite victim. That of Archilochus was Lycambes, who was said to have promised the poet first one and then the other of his daughters and then broken his promise. Hipponax of Ephesus (about 600) attacked a sculptor called Bupalus, who had caricatured in a statue his notorious deformity. Lucian says that Semonides too had his special victim in one Orodoecides; the suffix is Greek, but if the name is rightly transmitted, it must be of Oriental origin. None of the remains of his poetry which we possess seems to give evidence for personal abuse of any individual. But we have only forty-two fragments, only two of which are more than three lines long; and the tone of the longest and most celebrated piece among them certainly suggests an expert in invective. The other long fragment contains, like several iambic poems of Archilochus, reflection about life of a comparatively elevated sort, which might easily have found expression in elegiac verse; so do several other fragments. But others, though they contain no actual obscenities, seem to mention several things not likely to be treated in elegiac verse; they are about everyday birds and animals, or about food and cooking. On the whole, then, the subject-matter seems to be like that of the Archilochian iambus.

Aristotle remarked that the iambic metre was the one most suited to ordinary speech; it was

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made use of by the Athenian dramatists for the spoken portions of their plays. The Hellenistic Greeks called it "pedestrian", in comparison with the more elevated hexameter and lyric metres. It is not surprising that poems written in it should allow the mention of things considered below the dignity of more elevated verse.

Semonides of Amorgos

SEMONIDES OF AMORGOS is an obscure figure. His date is known only vaguely, and his life hardly at all; even the correct form of his name is uncertain. Almost all writers who mention him call him "Simonides." But an ancient grammarian asserts explicitly that his name was written with an "e"; and the danger of confusion with the better-known Simonides of Ceos (who lived from 556 to 468) makes it expedient to believe him. Simonides of Ceos is not known to have written iambics, and of the iambic verses quoted under this name all, or almost all, have the air of belonging to an earlier poet. Only in one case is there serious doubt as to which of the two poets a poem belongs to, and that is an elegiac poem.

Amorgos is one of the Sporades, a small island lying south-east of Naxos and north-west of Astypalaea. It is quite long, but very narrow; most of it consists of high mountains, and only the north-west coast is flat enough to be inhabited. Settlers from Naxos came first, and founded the harbour town of Arcesine and perhaps that of Aegialus or Aegiale also; later came another party, from Samos, and they resettled these places and founded a new harbour called Minoa. If we can accept the probable guess that part of the article on Semonides in the Byzantine encyclopaedia called the Suda has become mixed up with the article on the much later Rhodian poet Simmias, the poet Semonides came to Amorgos as the leader of these Samian settlers.

The colonisation is presumed to have happened at some time during the 7th century. That suits the dates given for Semonides. The Suda places him 490 years after the Trojan War; since that was conventionally dated in 1170, that puts him in 680. Cyril of Alexandria gives his date as 640. Proclus—probably not the Neoplatonist of the 5th century after Christ, but a grammarian of the second—makes him contemporary with Ananius of Macedonia. There was no such person, and the name must be corrupt. If it is corrupt for that of the Macedonian king Amyntas, it would indicate a 6th-century date; but if it is corrupt for the earlier king Argaeus, it would point to a date between 640 and 610, and so harmonise with the other evidence. Some have connected the colonisation with the fall of a Samian tyrant, Demoteles, thought to have happened about 600. But that is only a guess, and we have no way of dating Semonides precisely. Archilochus was certainly active during the middle of the 7th century; the eclipse of the sun which he witnessed was that of 6 April 648 B.C. Some ancient writers take him and some take Semonides to be the earlier; Clement says that their careers overlapped.

We know almost nothing of Samian domestic history during the 7th century, but we know something of Samian activities overseas. At this time Samos had trading links with Al Mina in Syria, with the Hellespontine area and with Egypt; about 630 a Samian ship made its way to Spain. In the Lelantine War over the rich Lelantine plain in Euboea, Samos fought on the side of Chalcis against Eretria and her own neighbour and rival Miletus, and finished on the winning side; during the Messenian revolt that began about 640, she sent help to Sparta. We know more of Samos during the 6th century, the most notable in her history. The great tyrant Polycrates built the famous temple of Hera, the tunnel through Mount Ampelus and the harbour wall. He was the patron of the poets Ibycus and Anacreon and of the famous school of Samian sculptors. Under his rule, the Samian fleet for a brief moment held the balance of naval power between Persia and the Egypt of Amasis. About this time flourished the most celebrated of all Samians, the mysterious Pythagoras. Even during the 7th century Samos must have been one of the most energetic of the Greek communities, and one of these with the widest foreign contacts.

Some have thought the story of Semonides' leadership of the colony to be a fabrication, made to harmonise his career with that of Archilochus, who took part in the Parian colonisation of Thasos. This seems unlikely; fabrications were not made simply for the sake of symmetry. The story may well have come from some early Samian chronicler; one such writer, Euagon, or whatever the right form of his name was, lived before the Peloponnesian War.

Semonides himself may have written a work of a historical character. The notice under his name in the Suda says that besides iambi he wrote an elegy in two books. Perhaps the number two really belongs to the books into which the iambi were arranged; a second book of the iambi is twice quoted. But another notice in the Suda, the one that has become confused with the notice on the poet Simmias, says that besides iambi and "various things" he wrote "an archaeology of the Samians." That title cannot be as old as Semonides; but he may well have written a poem about Samian history. The guess that equates it with the elegy may possibly be right. A later Samian poet, Asius, wrote during the fifth century

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an elegiac poem which mentioned at least one detail about early Samian customs.

Hesiod

IT IS OBVIOUS that the poem is influenced by one Greek writer earlier than Semonides—Hesiod of Ascra in Boeotia, who is usually thought to have written during the 8th century. He twice tells the story of the making of the first woman. In his *Theogony* he tells how Prometheus tricked Zeus into choosing for himself the inferior instead of the superior share of the meat of the sacrificial victim. Zeus retaliates by depriving men, Prometheus' protégés, of fire; and Prometheus steals fire from heaven in order to restore it to them. Then, to be revenged, Zeus tells Hephaestus to mould a woman from earth and together with Athene to adorn her. Her appearance excites the admiration of both gods and men. But she proves a disaster to the latter, because from her descends the race of women, a great plague to mortals when they live with men, adapted not to deadly poverty, but to pride. Women, conspirators in evil works, are like the drones which sit uselessly at home while the working bees are out collecting food. Another curse which Zeus lays upon men is that anyone who chooses to remain a bachelor can protect his property, but only at the price of having no children to look after him when he is old and to inherit his possessions. The man who marries a good and sensible wife acquires good mixed with evil; the man who marries a bad one lives in utter misery.

In his later poem, the *Works and Days*, Hesiod offers a somewhat different version of the myth. While urging his brother Perses to work hard for a living instead of trying to cheat him, he explains how Zeus came to ordain that men must work. Prometheus stole fire to give to men, and Zeus then warned him that in return for this he would send men a curse in which they would all delight, embracing their own ruin. With a loud laugh Zeus ordered Hephaestus to make the woman out of earth and water, Athene to teach her weaving, Aphrodite to invest her with beauty, but also with dangerous desirability and the power to cause torments that gnaw the limbs, and Hermes to give her a bitch's mind and thievish habits. Hermes gives her crafty speech and thievish habits as Zeus commands, and then endows her with a voice and calls her Pandora, because she has been given gifts by all the gods.

Hermes now took her to Epimetheus (whose name means "Afterthinker"), a brother of Prometheus ("the Forethinker"). His brother had warned him to accept no gift from Zeus, for fear it proves a curse in disguise; but Epimetheus only recognised the disaster when he had it. Formerly human beings lived on the earth removed from troubles and hateful pain and dread diseases, which give the fates of death to men; but now the woman removed the lid of a great jar and scattered them abroad, and caused mournful sorrows for mankind. Hope alone remained inside the jar, and did not fly out before the woman replaced the lid. Many other plagues wander among men, for earth and sea alike are full of evils, and diseases come of their own accord, some by day and some by night, silently, because Zeus has taken away their voice.

In the *Works and Days* the woman releases plagues by opening the jar. In the earlier account, she is herself the curse which Zeus sends to mortals. Neither account is at all flattering to women; and the attitude towards them adopted in the practical suggestions offered later in the poem, though not downright hostile, is both utilitarian and defensive. The farmer must start by providing himself with a wife and an ox for ploughing.

> "At the proper season" [Hesiod tells his farmer], "bring a wife to your home, when you are not much less than thirty years old and not much more; that is the time for marriage. Let the woman be ripe for four years and marry in the fifth. Marry a virgin, so that you can teach her good habits; and marry her who lives closest to you, surveying everything about her cautiously, so that you do not turn out to have married for the neighbours' pleasure. A man gets nothing better than a good woman and nothing more horrid than a bad one, one who guzzles dainties, who needs no torch to singe her husband, however stout a fellow he may be, and gives him to cruel old age."

The *Theogony* myth, in which the woman is herself the plague, is more germane to Semonides than the *Works and Days* myth, in which she brings disaster upon man by opening the jar. The *Theogony* myth stresses the extravagance and uselessness of women; the other myth mentions their cunning and their thievish propensities. The references to women that come later in the *Works and Days* strike a rather different note from that of the myth. The poet is particularly afraid of woman's greed and extravagance. But he allows that if married young and carefully trained she may acquire good habits, and actually concedes that though there is nothing worse than a bad wife there is nothing better than a good one (a sentiment repeated, with a clear echo of Hesiod, in a fragment of Semonides that does not form part of the iambus about women). We need not be troubled by the apparent inconsistency between the complete condemnation of women in the myth of the *Works and Days* and the qualified condemnation of the later part of the poem. We should expect the myth of woman's origin to represent her as a plague, but the practical suggestions about farming life to make some modification of this judgment.

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Hesiod was certainly known to Semonides. Yet the myth of woman's creation used by Semonides is not the same as either of Hesiod's versions of the story of Pandora. The legend that different women were made out of different animals is very unlikely to have been Semonides' own invention. Various similar myths attested from comparatively modern times might, it is true, have been influenced by the Semonidean story, or have come into existence independently. But the story has all the characteristics of a folk-tale. Four of the Semonidean types of woman—bitch, bee, sow, and mare—occur in the gnomic elegiac verses of Phocylides (a writer not easy to date but belonging to the 6th or, more probably, the 5th century). Other similar stories are known from other poets. The Hellenistic poet Callimachus is not likely to have made up the story that different men were given the voices of different animals; he will have taken it from a folk-tale to use it for his own satirical purpose of ascribing the voices of various animals to particular contemporaries. Horace's fable that man's irascibility was due to an element in his nature derived from the lion also seems ancient.

The Beast Fable

THE LEGEND HAS AN OBVIOUS AFFINITY with the beast fable. No kind of story has a longer history than this; it already existed in Egypt three thousand years before Christ. The Greeks ascribed their beast fables to Aesop, who according to legend was the Phrygian slave of Pythagoras, and so lived during the 6th century. The fables were not systematically collected and edited until Demetrius of Phalerum, at the end of the 4th century B.C. The Aesopic collection we possess is in its present form not earlier than the time of the Roman Empire. But the fables themselves must in many cases be far older than the 6th century, and we have evidence that some circulated in Oriental countries a good deal earlier than they are likely to have done in Greece.

The legend most like that used by Semonides is an Aesopic fable which says that Prometheus at first created too many animals and had not enough material left for men, so that he was forced to change some animals into men, and there are some men who have human exteriors but bestial souls. This may have been known to Semonides. It is possible that he adapted it so as to make the humans with bestial souls be women; but it is also possible that his account of the making of women was taken over ready-made from an existing folk-tale.

The beast fable had found its way into literature as early as Hesiod, who in the *Works and Days* had used the fable of the harmless nightingale in the claws of the ruthless hawk to drive home the helplessness of innocence against naked power. It had been used in memorable fashion by Archilochus, who in his epodes told the stories of the fox and the eagle and of the fox and the monkey to describe allegorically incidents of his own life.

THE POEM ABOUT WOMEN by Semonides of Amorgos is by far the longest specimen of the Greek literary genre known as the iambus that has been preserved. Its end is missing, and we cannot know for certain how much of it there originally was; but we possess 118 lines. Woman's mind was made separately by the god, the poet begins; and he goes on to describe nine disagreeable kinds of women, seven made from animals and two others from earth and sea. Only the tenth kind, made from a bee, makes a good wife. All the others are portrayed satirically. This occupies the first 93 lines of the poem; and the last 25 consist of general reflections upon women in which they are condemned wholesale, without even an exception in favour of the bee-woman.

Considering its historical interest as a specimen of early Greek poetry, as an early diatribe on the interesting subject of the female sex and as a document of some significance in the history of literary character-study, the poem has aroused little interest among scholars, at any rate in England; virtually all the important work done upon it has been done by Germans or in the German language. Most of those modern scholars who have discussed it have not valued it highly. It consists, Wilamowitz thought, of crude mockery of women, pretty well without wit and lacking in charm of presentation. Bethe called it "dry, long-winded, lacking in wit, without appeal and without art." Hermann Fränkel, who thinks the poem is important as an example of archaic modes of thought, finds that its literary value is slight. Its tone has drawn down much disapproval upon its author. Ludwig Radermacher thinks he was a man of crooked morals, though we must make allowances for him, because he led a hard life; and G. L. Huxley remarks that "the poet's stringent criticisms of women and rather pedestrian notions suggest that the Samian settlers may not have found his rule enlightened." When we have examined the poem more closely, we shall be able to enquire whether these estimates are deserved.

The Poem

IN JUDGING ANY POEM, it is important to bear in mind the literary genre it belongs to and its own place within it. We have seen

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that the iambus may be the vehicle of more or less elevated reflections about life in general; so it is in the next longest fragment of Semonides, whose subject-matter is remarkably like that of an elegiac poem which may or may not belong to the same author. But the iambus may be used for purposes that are less elevated; in particular, it may be used for satire. Addison described our poem, not unfairly in the language of his time, as a satire. It is not a satire on an individual, like many of the iambi of Archilochus, but a satire on an entire sex.

Wilamowitz pointed out that at certain Greek religious festivals, including the ceremonies which preceded the Eleusinian mysteries, women uttered abuse against men as part of the ritual. The abuse uttered by women during the procession to Eleusis was associated with the figure of the old woman who was supposed to have amused Demeter during the time of her sorrow by her ribaldries. This old woman was called Iambe; she was therefore the personification of the iambus and its spirit. Wilamowitz suggested that the iambus of Semonides was designed as a reply on behalf of men to the abuse of men uttered by women on these occasions. This seems to me improbable. The abuse spoken by women on religious occasions was part of a ritual, originating from an attempt to promote fertility, and could hardly have provoked an answer delivered on that or any other occasion. But the notion that the abuse of women was a regular literary theme, appropriate to the iambus and having conventions of its own, seems to have much in its favour. We find the motive in Hesiod, where it is handled in a somehow different tone, and we shall find it later in tragedy and comedy, again with a tone appropriate to the genre. Semonides' way of handling it seems highly characteristic of his own genre, that of the iambus.

When we evaluate this poem, we must keep the nature of that genre under consideration. Fränkel compares Semonides unfavourably with Hesiod; Hesiod, he says, is dignified and enlightened, and Semonides is not; Hesiod penetrates from the exterior of things to their inner nature, and everything in his poem stands in its context; his striking images always illustrate some counsel or some warning; Semonides is superficial in his thought, and slack in his presentation, and his imaginative power suffices only for details.

Fränkel denies that this difference is due to the difference of genre, pointing to the iambus of Archilochus, with its concentrated power and elegance of form. It is true that Archilochus is a great poet and Semonides is not. Yet in his poem about women Semonides is attempting something not aimed at in any of the surviving fragments of Archilochus, and comparison with Hesiod is not the fairest way of judging it.

Fränkel's failure to understand the poem's purpose is evident from his complaint that Semonides has allowed the combination of characteristics found in the animals to dictate that found in the women. The dirty and untidy woman, he says, has to be greedy too, because the pig is greedy; the obstinate woman has to be greedy, because the ass is greedy. Fränkel seems to assume that the poet's aim is to provide a systematic anatomy of female character; it seems not to have occurred to him that Semonides may wish to amuse his audience. The tirade against woman must have been not uncommon; the various specimens which appear in extant literature suggest that this was so. The iambus against women gives full expression to a jaundiced view of women of a standard type. We should be wary of taking it for granted that it represents the writer's personal attitude, or that it is intended as a serious study of the subject.

That the poem is intended to amuse does not, I trust, need demonstration. It has been remarked that it is written from the viewpoint of the peasant, or at least of the ordinary man. In the archaic age people living on the Aegean islands lived close to nature, as they still do. The modern scholar who found it strange that in Aeschylus' *Diktyoulkoi* the brother of the king of Seriphos seems to be a fisherman had not considered the size of that island or the conditions of life upon it. At the same time, the likelihood that Semonides was the leader of the colony, and therefore an important man, should put us on our guard against assuming that the social environment in which the poem is located was necessarily his own.

Women in Greek Literature

SO MANY SCHOLARS have taken the poem as a deliberate statement of its author's opinions about women that it is necessary to consider the subject of their treatment in Greek literature. It is notorious that in Greece at this time and for a long time afterwards women suffered under many social and legal disabilities. They lacked political rights, even in 5th century Athens. A woman had to have a legal guardian of the male sex, and though she could transmit property to males, she could not fully control what was her own without that guardian's consent. A wife was in the power of her husband, and divorce was not easy, at any rate without active help from her own family; even then, she might have to sacrifice her dowry. The penalties for adultery were severe. The institution of marriage was above all else an important element in the system under which property was held. All

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this applies even to 5th century Athens. Our knowledge of social life in 7th century Ionia is most imperfect, but on the whole women living in this part of Greece, in close proximity to Oriental neighbours, enjoyed less liberty than women did in mainland Greece.

It is also well known that for many male persons in archaic Greece, particularly among members of the higher social classes, boys and young men rather than women were the chief object of erotic interest. It is thought that this state of affairs was promoted by the women's unemancipated state and lack of proper education. Semonides' poem, like Hesiod's Pandora myths, is often quoted as an illustration of the contemptuous attitude to women promoted by the social and sexual disabilities from which they suffered.

It must of course be conceded that the women portrayed in the heroic epic do not accord with the picture of a depressed inferior sex. The portrayal of Andromache and Penelope shows that the writers of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were well aware of the most favourable aspects under which married life may appear. The presentation of Helen in the *Iliad* shows the poet to be wholly aware of the power of such a woman, and the nature of her attraction is most subtly exhibited by her speech and her behaviour. In the *Odyssey* she is shown back at Sparta as if nothing had happened, in full command of household and husband and behaving with the same gentle modesty and distinguished courtesy that make her, in the earlier poem, so fascinating and so redoubtable. Women's position in the epic age, we are often told, is different. Even Semonides feels differently about the upper classes; disastrous as she is for a peasant, the mare-woman makes a suitable wife for a king. But we must remember that Semonides' original audience certainly knew the epic, and the attitude to women found in it was one of those which they had to take into account. Nor is there anything about the married life of Hector and Andromache or of Odysseus and Penelope which is specifically royal or aristocratic.

HESIOD IS INDEED a serious writer, concerned to instruct his hearers in religion and in morals. The nature of the myths of the creation of woman which he recounts is certainly not without significance for the general attitudes towards them of Greek society; and the remarks about a wife's duty in the part of his poem that contains practical advice shows that in a poor man's household a wife was expected to manage the household economically and produce children. But we must make allowance for Hesiod's general tone. The government of the world by the gods is shown with a tough-minded realism; the practical advice to farmers is correspondingly hard-headed. On the metaphysical plane, so to speak, represented by the creation myth, Hesiod holds that it is a pity man cannot reproduce his species without a woman's help; on the practical plane represented by the later part of the poem, he is willing to allow that some good wives can be found. He is not concerned, as Semonides is, to exploit the comic possibilities of the wives who are less good. Hesiod is another poet whom Semonides' audiences will have known; his attitude to women was doubtless close to their own. But it is not identical with that found in Semonides' poem, and the difference may at least partly be accounted for by the difference of literary purpose.

Other considerations should warn us against generalisations based too exclusively upon the disapproval of women expressed in Hesiod and Semonides. In eastern Greece itself, less, and perhaps much less, than a century after Semonides, we find Sappho and the society in which she moved. Mysterious as that society is, it can hardly be doubted that Sappho was, by the standards of the time, well educated—she knew the poets well—and that she and other women known to her enjoyed a certain degree of personal freedom. Sappho was of course an aristocrat, like Cimon's sister Elpinice[1] and Pericles' mistress Aspasia. Women with husbands of some means certainly enjoyed considerable power in their own households; that is clear even from the condescending lectures to his wife given by Xenophon's priggish young Athenian, Ischomachus. Women in a lower social class naturally had fewer opportunities; they will have had to work hard at domestic duties, as Hesiod and Semonides indicate. But it is matter for simple observation that in those modern countries by the Mediterranean where women are in theory unemancipated in comparison with those in England or America, many women know how to get their way in dealings with men just as well as, if not better than, their supposedly freer counterparts; and we have good grounds for thinking that this was true in antiquity also. The housewife of Greek comedy, both old and new, can hold her own. She may be an aristocratic spendthrift, like the wife of Strepsiades; she may be a nagging scold, especially if, like Crobyle in Menander's *Plokion* or Nausistrata in the Apollodoran original of Terence's *Phormio*, she is a rich heiress. Again, just as the prevalence of arranged marriages in modern France does not mean that romantic sentiment towards women does not exist, comedy proves unmistakably that many Athenians did

[1] An ostrakon used to record a vote during an ostracism which has lately been found at Athens is inscribed, "Let Cimon go and take Elpinice with him".

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fall in love with women. Nor must this love in every case be written off as crude desire. The young husbands in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, Apollodorus' *Hecyra* and the prologue of a lost play, perhaps by Menander, are as genuinely attached to their wives as is the husband of Semonides' bee-woman.

In Aristophanic comedy women have a sense of forming, for certain purposes, a kind of separate community. At their own secret festival, they plan revenge on Euripides. They organise a sexual strike under the dignified priestess Lysistrata. They take over the Assembly and introduce communism under the formidable housewife Praxagora. To Aristophanes and his audience, the very idea of women taking part in such activities is irresistibly funny; such events as these belong to the comic world of fantasy. At the same time, it is significant that such fantasies existed. The fantasy of the women's assembly has an obvious relationship to the views about communism and women's liberation

Addison in The Spectator *(1711)*

THERE *are no Authors I am more pleafed with, than thofe who fhew humane nature in a variety of views, and defcribe the feveral ages of the world in their different manners. A Reader cannot be more rationally entertained, than by comparing the virtues and vices of his own times, with thofe which prevailed in the times of his fore-fathers; and drawing a parallel in his mind between his own private character, and that of other perfons, whether of his own age, or of the ages that went before him. The contemplation of mankind under thefe changeable colours, is apt to fhame us out of any particular vice, or animate us to any particular virtue; to make us pleafed or difpleafed with our felves in the moft proper points, to clear our minds of prejudice and prepoffeffion, and rectify that narrownefs of temper which inclines us to think amifs of thofe who differ from our felves.*

If we look into the manners of the moft remote ages of the world, we difcover humane nature in her fimplicity; and the more we come downward towards our own times, may obferve her hiding her felf in artifices and refinements, polifhed infenfibly out of her original plainnefs, and at length entirely loft under form and ceremony, and (what we call) good breeding. Read the accounts of men and women as they are given us by the moft ancient writers, both facred and prophane, and you would think you were reading the hiftory of another fpecies.

Among the writers of antiquity, there are none who inftruct us more openly in the manners of their refpective times in which they lived, than thofe who have employed themfelves in fatyr, under what drefs foever it may appear; as there are no other Authors whofe province it is to enter fo directly into the ways of men, and fet their mifcarriages in fo ftrong a light.

SIMONIDES, *a Poet famous in his generation, is I think Author of the oldeft Satyr that is now extant; and, as fome fay, of the firft that was ever written. This Poet flourifhed about four hundred years after the fiege of* Troy; *and fhews, by his way of writing, the fimplicity, or rather coarfnefs, of the age in which he lived. I have taken notice, in my hundred and fixty firft Speculation, that the rule of obferving what the* French *call the* Bienfeance, *in an allufion, has been found out of latter years; and that the ancients, provided there was a likenefs in their fimilitudes, did not much trouble themfelves about the decency of the comparifon. The Satyrs or Iambicks of* Simonides, *with which I fhall entertain my Readers in the prefent paper, are a remarkable inftance of what I formerly advanced. The fubject of this Satyr is Woman. He defcribes the fex in their feveral characters, which he derives to them from a fanciful fuppofition raifed upon the doctrine of Prae-exiftence. He tells us, That the Gods formed the Souls of women out of thofe feeds and principles which compofe feveral kinds of animals and elements; and that their good or bad difpofitions arife in them according as fuch and fuch feeds and principles predominate in their conftitutions. I have tranflated the Author very faithfully, and if not word for word (which our language would not bear) at leaft fo as to comprehend every one of his fentiments, without adding any thing of my own. I have already apologized for this Author's want of delicacy, and muft further premife, That the following Satyr affects only fome of the lower part of the fex, and not thofe who have been refined by a polite education which was not fo common in the age of this Poet. . . .*

I FHALL CONCLUDE *thefe Iambicks with the motto of this paper, which is a fragment of the fame Author:* **A man cannot poffefs any thing that is better than a good woman, nor any thing that is worfe than a bad one.**

As the Poet has fhewn a great penetration in this diverfity of female characters, he has avoided the fault which Juvenal *and Monfieur* Boileau *are guilty of, the former in his fixth, and the other in his laft Satyr, where they have endeavoured to expofe the fex in general, without doing juftice to the valuable part of it. Such levelling Satyrs are of no ufe to the world, and for this reafon I have often wondered how the* French *Author above-mentioned, who was a man of exquifite judgment, and a lover of virtue, could think humane nature a proper fubject for Satyr in another of his celebrated pieces, which is called* The Satyr upon Man. *What vice or frailty can a difcourfe correct, which cenfures the whole fpecies alike, and endeavours to fhew by fome fuperficial ftrokes of wit, that brutes are the more excellent creatures of the two? A Satyr fhould expofe nothing but what is corrigible, and make a due difcrimination between thofe who are, and thofe who are not the proper objects of it.*

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actually expressed by Plato and in circulation, as Aristophanes' play shows, long before his time. Even in the *Oresteia*, produced in 458 B.C., the clash between man and woman forms one of the trilogy's pervading themes; man's essential superiority is upheld, but the fact that man and woman and their respective claims are pitted against each other is significant. Creon in the *Antigone* strongly objects to being defied by a woman; Creon is a personage whose actions do not command approval. In pity for Medea at her desertion by Jason, the chorus of Euripides' *Medea* sing a great ode of defiance against men: "honour," they declare, "is coming to the race of women; no longer shall evil repute be ours." Beyond any question, in the age of the great sophists the question of women's rights was in the air. To understand the significance of this, one must remember that nothing of the kind had occurred, to the best of our knowledge, in any of the surrounding civilisations at the time in question. In respect of women's liberties, as in so many other ways, the Greeks must be admitted to have been pioneers.

The basic Greek attitude to women was, like the basic Greek attitude to most permanent features of human life, realistic and disillusioned. It finds expression in Hesiod's myths about Pandora; it is exploited, for a purpose that is above all comic, in Semonides' poem. But in the practical advice given by Hesiod and in Semonides' account of his bee-women, we find these authors reluctant to generalise in practice from the wholesale condemnation that their metaphysic would demand; and that reluctance seems typical of men's attitude over a long period. It is significant that this culture was by a long way the first to give serious consideration to the question of whether the subordination of women which had from time immemorial been a fact of life was or was not unjust. Surely we should be wary of reading Semonides' poem as though it were the serious and deliberate pronouncement of a writer for whom truth came first and entertainment only second.

Character in Greek Literature

SEMONIDES has a special place in the history of character-study; he may be considered an ancestor of Theophrastus and through him of the whole tradition that includes La Bruyère in France and Overbury and Earle in England. Modern historians of ideas have explained to us that his notion of character is primitive. Bruno Snell complains that "the types [of women] are rigidly fixed according to the animal from which each one of them is descended"; he is following Fränkel, who finds fault with Semonides for making some characteristics belong to several different types of woman simply because he was not capable of thinking of enough different qualities to supply ten different kinds of female nature. He blames him for allowing the types of woman to be fixed by the types of animal; the sluttish woman and the stubborn woman both have to be greedy, because the pig and ass both are.

The whole point of Semonides' poem is that certain types of women do resemble certain animals; perhaps the same is true of certain types of men, but that is not relevant. The types which he sketches very naturally have certain qualities in common; it would be surprising if any poet, however imaginative, could describe ten different types of women without a single common quality, and his description would hardly be very true to life. To complain that his types are not exhaustive of those that exist, or that a few of them combine qualities not regularly found together, would be to ignore the poet's real purpose. Any unbiased reader will admit that on the whole the types of women that Semonides describes have enough verisimilitude to be amusing; and if their qualities did not correspond with those of the animals in question, the point of the joke would vanish.

The notion that the Greeks of Semonides' time were capable only of a primitive conception of human character cannot, I think, be justified. Semonides and his contemporaries were familiar with the Homeric epic, whose characterisation, if its aims and methods are properly understood, is of unusual strength and subtlety. In Greek literature the main concern is the action, and the actors must be characterised so far as to appear capable of the actions credited to them by the story. To a great degree the authors are indifferent to personal idiosyncrasy and delicate psychological shading; and the generations that brought the exploration of character to the pitch it reached in the work of Joyce, Proust and their contemporaries were apt either to read into Greek literature nuances of characterisation that were not really there or else to write it off as demonstrably defective in this important literary skill. For examples of the former tendency, we need look no further than the unconvincing psychological explanations of the actions of characters in Greek tragedy that were in general currency before T. V. Wilamowitz's celebrated study of Sophoclean dramatic technique began to have effect. Examples of the second tendency are furnished by works influenced by the theory of the gradual linear development of Greek intellectual concepts whose best-known exponent is Bruno Snell. Both these attitudes are mistaken. Homeric characterisation not only exists, but is extraordinarily skilful, if its distinctive qualities, and with them the gulf that separates it from characterisation in the modern novel, are properly understood.

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Like Semonides' female types, Homer's main heroes have many qualities in common; courage, determination and resourcefulness are obvious cases in point. Yet none is colourless and each is clearly distinct from every other. The differences between, say, Agamemnon, Nestor and Odysseus are comparatively clear. More remarkable is the differentiation between characters who, on the face of it, are very like each other; for example, that between Achilles, Ajax and Diomedes. By far the most elaborate characterisation in the *Iliad* is that of Achilles; even in our own time, so hostile to individuality even in literature, the remarkably idiosyncratic character of his way of speaking has not failed to be observed. Another full characterisation is that of Hector. In the *Odyssey*, the personality of the hero himself is sketched in the richest detail; how distinctive are his curiosity and his vanity! He has to explore the island of the Cyclopes and the island of Circe; he must meet Polyphemus and see what kind of presents he makes to his guests; he must return to Circe's house. He is so vain that he must tell Polyphemus his true name, thus making it possible for his enemy to curse him.

Drama had less space for extended characterisation than the epic; we should remember how much shorter the average Greek tragedy is than the average Elizabethan play. Yet the basic principles of characterisation are the same for the tragedians as they are for Homer. The character must be shown as being the sort of person to act as he acts in the story; action comes first and character comes later. Individual idiosyncrasy is not important. What are important are the basic emotions and the qualities that relate to them, such as pride, generosity, and honesty and their opposites. Eteocles and Agamemnon have complicated parts to play in the action: each is a noble hero, yet at the same time the inheritor of a family curse. Clytemnestra has a distinctive character, for her actions are exceptional. Orestes too performs an exceptional action; but he has no choice but to act as he does, and though his emotions are registered with the usual Aeschylean verisimilitude, he lacks distinctive colour.

In Sophocles the heroic characters are set against the characters who are unheroic. Ajax contrasts with Odysseus, Antigone with Ismene, Electra with Chrysothemis, the first Oedipus with Creon. Some Sophoclean figures, particularly among the heroic characters, are delineated with great richness of detail; one thinks especially of the two Oedipuses, of Electra, and of Philoctetes. But in these plays, as in those of Aeschylus, the basic human emotions count for almost everything, psychological nicety for its own sake for nothing. This is not to condemn as irrelevant the rich psychological detail found, to take the examples chosen by John Bayley[2] for his brilliant defence of the autonomy of character in literature, in Chaucer, in Shakespeare or in Henry James; it is simply to point out that the characterising technique of the brief and austere tragedies of the Greeks was different.

Characterisation both in the Old and in the New Comedy is again governed by the basic principle that the character must be such as to act as the story tells us that he acted; but the nature of the genre entails certain differences. In the Old Comedy exaggeration, and not truth to nature, is an important feature. The characteristics of the ordinary Athenian are vastly magnified in the "old man" who is the standard comic hero; extreme selfishness, cowardice, and sensuality combine with extreme self-confidence, resourcefulness and good fortune to make a Dicaeopolis or a Peisetaerus. Just so the lesser figures are types shaped to discharge their special function in the action. New Comedy is in this respect, as in several others, more akin to tragedy. The characters may be classifiable according to the obvious types, but they are subtly differentiated, each in accordance with the special requirements of the action of the play which he belongs to. The element of caricature survives in figures with a ruling passion, like the misanthrope, the flatterer, the superstitious man, who occur in a number of the plays. From such characters we may look aside to Theophrastus or back through the Old Comedy to Semonides.

In the light of this sketch the literary purpose of Semonides should be seen more clearly. It was not his purpose to supply an exhaustive catalogue of the chief types of feminine psychology. Rather he wished to entertain his audience by exploiting an observed resemblance between certain kinds of woman and certain kinds of animal, and by making use of this to argue the case in favour of the familiar thesis that the biggest plague to man is woman. The familiarity of this thesis to the Greeks, and its occurrence in the far more important and far more serious poetry of Hesiod, certainly tells us something about the Greek male attitude to women. But it would be unwise to take it as an exhaustive summary of the attitude towards them even of the men of Semonides' own society, time and place; and to get the best value from it we must combine it with other evidence, both from literature and from other sources. We have seen that in other Greek literature also one encounters the kind of character-study, or caricature, that makes play with the ruling passion, the dominant characteristic, the prevailing humour; and we have seen that the authors who exploit it, even the eminent philosopher Theophrastus, do so for ends that are not entirely serious.

[2] See John Bayley, *The Characters of Love* (1960)

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IN THE BEGINNING the god made the female mind separately. One he made from a long-bristled sow. In her house everything lies in disorder, smeared with mud, and rolls about the floor; and she herself unwashed, in clothes unlaundered, sits by the dungheap and grows fat.

ANOTHER HE MADE from a wicked vixen; a woman who knows everything. No bad thing and no better kind of thing is lost on her; for she often calls a good thing bad and a bad thing good. Her attitude is never the same.

ANOTHER HE MADE from a bitch, vicious, own daughter of her mother, who wants to hear everything and know everything. She peers everywhere and strays everywhere, always yapping, even if she sees no human being. A man cannot stop her by threatening, nor by losing his temper and knocking out her teeth with a stone, nor with honeyed words, not even if she is sitting with friends, but ceaselessly she keeps up a barking you can do nothing with.

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ANOTHER he made from a ferret, a miserable, wretched creature; nothing about her is beautiful or desirable, pleasing or lovable. She is mad for the bed of love, but she makes any man she has with her sick. She does great damage to neighbours by her thieving, and often eats up sacrifices left unburned.

ANOTHER was the offspring of a proud mare with a long mane. She pushes servile work and trouble on to others; she would never set her hand to a mill, nor pick up a sieve nor throw the dung out of the house, nor sit over the oven dodging the soot; she makes her husband acquainted with Necessity. She washes the dirt off herself twice, sometimes three times, every day; she rubs herself with scents, and always has her thick hair combed and garlanded with flowers. A woman like her is a fine sight for others, but for the man she belongs to she proves a plague, unless he is some tyrant or king [who takes pride in such objects].

ANOTHER IS FROM A MONKEY; this is the biggest plague of all that Zeus has given to men. Her face is hideous; when a woman like her goes through the town, everyone laughs at her. She is short in the neck; she moves awkwardly; she has no bottom, and is all legs. Hard luck on the poor man who holds such a misery in his arms! She knows every trick and twist, just like a monkey; she does not mind being laughed at, and will do no one a good turn, but considers, and spends the whole day planning, how she can do someone the worst possible harm.

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ANOTHER the Olympians moulded out of earth, a stunted creature; you see, a woman like her knows nothing, bad or good. The only work she understands is eating; and not even when the god makes cruel winter weather does she feel the cold and draw a stool near to the fire.

ANOTHER he made from the sea; she has two characters. One day she smiles and is happy; a stranger who sees her in the house will praise her, and say, "There is no woman better than this among all mankind, nor more beautiful." But on another day she is unbearable to look at or come near to; then she raves so that you can't approach her, like a bitch over her pups, and she shows herself ungentle and contrary to enemies and friends alike. Just so the sea often stands without a tremor, harmless, a great delight to sailors, in the summer season; but often it raves, tossed about by thundering waves. It is the sea that such a woman most resembles in her temper; like the ocean, she has a changeful nature.

ANOTHER HE MADE from an ash-grey ass that has suffered many blows; when compelled and scolded she puts up with everything, much against her will, and does her work to satisfaction. But meanwhile she munches in the back room all night and all day, and she munches by the hearth; and likewise when she comes to the act of love, she accepts any partner.

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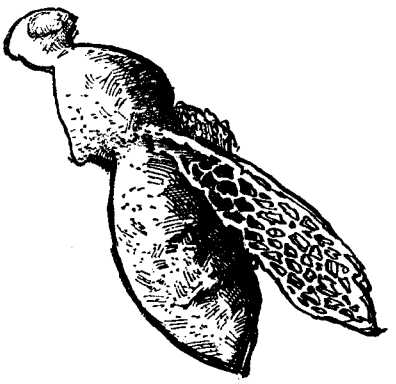

ANOTHER is from a bee; the man who gets her is fortunate, for on her alone blame does not settle. She causes his property to grow and increase, and she grows old with a husband whom she loves and who loves her, the mother of a handsome and reputable family. She stands out among all women, and a god-like beauty plays about her. She takes no pleasure in sitting among women in places where they tell stories about love. Women like her are the best and most sensible whom Zeus bestows on men.

ZEUS HAS CONTRIVED that all these tribes of women are with men and remain with them. Yes, this is the worst plague Zeus has made—women; if they seem to be some use to him who has them, it is to him especially that they prove a plague. The man who lives with a woman never goes through all his day in cheerfulness; he will not be quick to push out of his house Starvation, a housemate who is an enemy, a god who is against us. Just when a man most wishes to enjoy himself at home, through the dispensation of a god or the kindness of a man, she finds a way of finding fault with him and lifts her crest for battle. Yes, where there is a woman, men cannot even give hearty entertainment to a guest who has come to the house; and the very woman who seems most respectable is the one who turns out guilty of the worst atrocity; because while her husband is not looking . . . and the neighbours get pleasure in seeing how he too is mistaken. Each man will take care to praise his own wife and find fault with the other's; we do not realise that the fate of all of us is alike. Yes, this is the greatest plague that Zeus has made, and he has bound us to them with a fetter that cannot be broken. Because of this some have gone to Hades fighting for a woman. . . .

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Death in Hero's Costume

The Meaning of Mishima—By JOHN SPURLING

YUKIO MISHIMA was not only a novelist, body-builder and founder/leader of a private army; he also wrote forty plays and starred in films. Just before his death he suggested that "Theatre, where a false blood runs in the floodlights, can perhaps move and enrich people with much more forceful and profound experiences than anything in real life." Seen with hindsight, the last months of his life look like nothing so much as a carefully structured theatrical event, with the author in the starring role and a world-wide audience for the real blood at the end. Without giving away the *dénouement*, Mishima obliquely closed accounts with his publisher and friends; he transferred the rights of two early best-selling books (written before his marriage) to his mother; and he picked the five student "warriors" who were to form the group around him in the final scene. But these arrangements, together with the meticulously detailed planning of the final scene itself, formed only the most mundane level of his structure.

Mishima committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide) in Tokyo, in the presence of the Eastern Army Commander, whom his "warriors" had previously tied to a chair in his own office, on 25 November 1970. In mid-September Mishima had posed for a series of photographs called "Death of a Man." The series, inspired and designed by Mishima, showed him undergoing a variety of violent deaths, including *seppuku* and Saint Sebastian's death by arrows. Mishima's pose in this photograph was imitated from Guido Reni's painting of Sebastian, which, according to the autobiographical *Confessions of a Mask* (published in 1949), was the cause, reproduced in one of his father's books and stumbled upon by the pubescent Mishima, of his first ejaculation. At the beginning of November 1970, Mishima had mounted in a Tokyo department store a complete photographic retrospective of his life and work, which he divided into four "rivers", Writing, Theatre, Body and Action. In the catalogue to the exhibition he spoke of the four rivers "all finally flowing into *The Sea of Fertility*." This monumental last novel, a tetralogy 1,400 pages long, begun five years earlier and finished in August, was dated on the last page 25 November 1970.

Clearly this multi-dimensional demonstration was intended to give food for thought. In the same passage about the theatre from which I have already quoted and which appeared in the catalogue to the "four rivers" exhibition, Mishima declared "I find the beauty of the theatre in its abstract and theoretical structure, and this particular beauty never ceased to be the very image of what I have always held in the depth of my heart as Ideal in Art." In *Runaway Horses*, the second volume of the tetralogy, the protagonist Honda attends a *Nō* play and is deeply moved by its first line: "Drawing our brine cart along, how briefly we live in this sad world, how fleetingly!" He is moved not by the meaning of the line but by "the significance of the unaccountable shudder that he had felt when the *shité* and his companion had stood together on the bridgeway and recited it, the moment of recitation imbued with perfect stillness, the chant falling like quiet rain." He judges that the significance of his shudder lies in the sudden manifestation of a beauty which is both ephemeral and futile: "A man could do nothing but commit it to memory immediately and reflect upon it thereafter." This exact description of what the *Nō* Theatre (and other kinds of theatre too, at their best) offers to its audience is surely a model of what Mishima intended by his theatrical suicide and its elaborate appurtenances. He wanted to signify something, but he also wanted to create a mystery, so that the significance should flower only in reflection and not lose its value in any such simplification as "Mishima killed himself because. . . ."

Most of all he evidently meant to involve his whole life and work in his death, so that the repellent and ridiculous circumstances of the act itself—disembowelling himself over an office carpet, wearing the Japanese version of a Ruritanian uniform, for a political cause which even he, a master of clarity, had difficulty in

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defining—should not, at any rate after the first reaction, simply brand him as temporarily mad or, worse still, playing to the gallery. Of course, the fact that there were ridiculous and repellent circumstances and a considerable element of playing to the gallery was inevitable, given that the act was Mishima's; these flaws run through his writing too, but they no more justify contempt for his work than for his manner of death.

With the recent publication of two biographies[1] at the same time as the English translation of the last volume of the tetralogy[2], English readers are now in a position to reflect on Mishima's significance. Both biographers were friends of Mishima, curiously enough in direct succession. The American, John Nathan, now an associate professor of Japanese at Princeton, met Mishima in 1964 when he began to translate his novel *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, but offended him deeply when two years later he declined to translate another novel. Nathan never saw or heard from him again. Henry Scott Stokes, an English journalist on *The Times*, met Mishima in 1966. He continued to see Mishima regularly until his death and was almost present at it, arriving at the headquarters of the Eastern Army a few minutes afterwards. He also took part in a training exercise with Mishima's private army on the snowbound slopes of Mount Fuji.

BOTH BIOGRAPHERS were charmed and impressed by Mishima, who was a man of prodigious energy and high intelligence, with a strong sense of humour. He published more than a hundred books, "best-sellers" as well as best-selling serious novels, in addition to innumerable articles, essays and short stories in magazines; he devoted his nights to writing, his days to the strenuous physical activities such as weightlifting and *kendo* (Japanese fencing with wooden swords) which he took up in 1955. He began writing fiction at the age of eleven and was early recognised at school (the Peers' School which figures so prominently in the first volume of the tetralogy) as a literary prodigy. He left school in 1944 at the head of his class and was awarded the traditional silver watch by the Emperor. After the war he was a law student at Tokyo University and, having graduated in 1947, almost immediately passed two *élite* civil service exams and entered the prestigious Finance Ministry, from which he resigned nine months later to become a full-time writer. By the age of twenty-four he had published his first best-seller, the distasteful but brilliant *Confessions of a Mask*.

Nathan and Scott Stokes both emphasise the difficulty of really knowing Mishima, in spite of his outward friendliness. Nathan writes that "Mishima had a great gift for making a man feel he was a closer friend than anyone else"; Scott Stokes, who naturally displays more affection for him since he never broke with him, says the same thing with a kinder nuance: "he had the gift of persuading people whom he met that they alone mattered to him." All his friends, it seems, were kept in complete ignorance of his plans for suicide and were even, Nathan suggests, somewhat bitter at the thought of how little they finally counted with him. Only his wife—it was an arranged marriage which seems to have worked well, though neither biographer is able to throw much light on it—admitted that she suspected something was going to happen, though she had thought not for another year.

Nathan's is the smoother account and at first reading the more authoritative. He is particularly good on Mishima's childhood, for which Scott Stokes relies almost entirely on *Confessions of a Mask*. Nathan relies on it too, but he has gone to Mishima's parents for perspective. Given the facts set out by Nathan and the vivid impression he conveys of his meetings with the parents, it is not hard to find childhood sources for Mishima's "four rivers" and for his painful death. One must remember, however, that most of these facts originate in Mishima's own writings and that their pattern is also to his design.

He was born Kimitake Hiraoka in 1925 (Yukio Mishima was a pen-name adopted when he was sixteen for his first published work), his parents' first child. Before he was three months old, his paternal grandmother, Natsu, took him to live with her in her darkened sickroom on the ground floor of the family house, allowing him upstairs only for exactly timed periods to receive his mother's milk. He grew up small and frail, permitted to play only with girls and with girls' toys, confined much of the time to his grandmother's room. When he was nine, his parents moved to another house, but he remained with Natsu, who was by now very ill and whom he had to nurse continually. Not until he was twelve did she suddenly order him to rejoin his parents. Nathan writes: "Kimitake's response to the circumstances of his childhood was frighteningly internal. His parents agree that he accepted Natsu's rule without protest or even apparent emotion." He showed no emotion when she died two years after releasing him. Nathan's summary of this period seems just:

[1] *Mishima*. By JOHN NATHAN. Hamish Hamilton, £4.50. *The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima*. By HENRY SCOTT STOKES. Peter Owen, £4.25

[2] *The Decay of the Angel*. By YUKIO MISHIMA. Translated by EDWARD G. SEIDENSTICKER. Secker & Warburg, £3.00

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> . . . it is scarcely possible to exaggerate Natsu's effect on Kimitake's life. Very likely the domestic situation she created was the basis for the latent homosexuality already beginning to trouble him as he grew into pubescence. But her influence on his life was even more comprehensive: by whispering into Kimitake's ear for all those years her profound dissatisfaction with herself and her wildly poetic longing for a distant past, an elegant past, a past of beauty, she can be said to have afflicted him with "the romantic agony." Surely he was in its grip by the time he was a twelve-year-old, longing like a true romantic for purity and beauty and possessed by a fierce impossible desire to be other than himself.

Natsu also passed on to him her passion for the theatre.

The reaction on the part of both child and mother after this long separation may be guessed. His mother adored Kimitake, as Nathan puts it, "in a manner almost too ardent to be called motherly." Scott Stokes says that after Mishima's suicide his mother said, "My lover has returned to me", and he quotes an old family friend of the Hiraokas as saying "When Mishima started to live with his mother he fell in love with the poor, beautiful woman who had been so cruelly treated by her awful mother-in-law." Add to this intense relationship a father who set himself to correct what he called "bookishness" and "girlishness"; who tore up his son's work when he found him writing in his room; who was described by his wife to Nathan as "a sadist" and by his son, when he was still at school early in the war, as "a bureaucrat frozen stiff with the bureaucratic spirit. . . . He harps on one string only: Nazis, Nazis, Nazis"; and the more lurid facets of Mishima's character seem scarcely surprising.

THE WEAKNESS of Nathan's book is that he is content with the psychological explanation of Mishima's life and death. In his preface Nathan modestly disclaims any pretence at offering an explanation "complex enough to accommodate the reality of Mishima's suicide" and goes on: "the story of his life as I perceive it *appears* to be principally about his erotic fascination with death. It appears, I mean, that Mishima wanted *passionately* to die all his life, and that he chose 'patriotism' quite consciously as a means to the painful 'heroic' death his life-long fantasy prescribed." The biography argues this thesis soberly and cogently, since nearly everything that Mishima did and wrote offers much evidence to support it. Nathan shows, for example, that *Confessions of a Mask* was a watershed for Mishima, a first "closing of accounts" with the powerful fantasy world of "Night and Blood and Death" which perpetually stood in the way of his coming to terms with

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reality. Nathan adduces Mishima's own note to *Confessions of a Mask*: "This book is a last testament I want to leave behind in the domain of death, where I have resided until now", but points out that since the book was a self-discovery at the same time as a confession, it actually amounted to an *opening* of accounts. Once Mishima had "verified" his sexual perversion, he could not but cultivate it, first in words and then in action.

This raises the question of self-awareness. Few writers have written about themselves with more self-knowledge than Mishima, just as nothing could have been more self-conscious than his death. Mishima's fiction is as remarkable for its extreme clarity as for its romantic fascination with death. There was a period in Mishima's life, after his first visit to Greece, when he became a devotee of Greek classical art and literature. He already loved the Japanese classics which Scott Stokes tells us was "a most uncommon taste for one of his generation in Japan." Although he later repudiated this classical phase and although Nathan convincingly discounts it as another effort at "closing accounts", a valiant attempt to recover his mental health, as his body-building was an attempt to recover physical health, both attempts were surely in some sense successful. Mishima did become very strong physically and he did, in his best work, achieve the classical, withdrawn beauty which moved Honda so much in the *Nō* play; that "abstract and theoretical structure" which, writing just before his death, he still considered the source of his "Ideal in Art."

It is not that Nathan's thesis is untrue, but that it is too narrow. By emphasising part of the content of Mishima's work and life—an important part, but not the whole—and ignoring the form, taking the self-awareness for granted, he presents a distorted view. Significantly, he hardly deals with the most ambitious and self-conscious of all Mishima's fictional structures, the tetralogy, which was itself one of the chief elements in the extraordinarily self-conscious structure of Mishima's suicide. Nathan's thesis, to take a small example, makes little sense of the suicide note Mishima left on his desk and which Nathan does not mention: "Human life is limited, but I would like to live for ever."

HENRY SCOTT STOKES's biography suffers from being clumsily organised and in particular from beginning with a long blow-by-blow reportage of the final scene. But in spite of this and other lapses of proportion, a living and sympathetic portrait of the subject emerges, where Nathan's version sometimes sinks to being a case-history. Scott Stokes takes special trouble to explain details of the Japanese background which are unfamiliar to the ordinary reader and he keeps an open mind throughout on the question of Mishima's suicide. Discussing all the various theories at the end of his book, he inclines towards the idea that Mishima and Morita, the leader of his five "warriors" and the only one to die with him, had decided to commit a *shinju*, or lovers' suicide. Nathan also thinks this quite likely and it would not of course conflict with his own view.

Scott Stokes is able to give a partly inside account of the last private army phase of Mishima's career, which he investigated for *The Times*. Both biographers agree that the violent demonstrations in 1960 against the renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty—demonstrations which Mishima reported for the national press—"catalyzed", as Scott Stokes puts it, "Mishima's nostalgia for 'Nippon Past'." They also agree that the short story *Patriotism*, written in 1960, is an important key to Mishima's increasing preoccupation with the need for some sort of "heroic" action. The story, set in 1936, describes in detail how an army lieutenant commits *seppuku*. He does so because he sympathises with a revolt against the government on behalf of the emperor. There are close parallels with the second volume of the tetralogy and with Mishima's own suicide scenario. In 1965 Mishima made a silent film of this story, with himself as the lieutenant and Wagner's "Liebestod" on the sound-track.

The Shield Society, Mishima's private army, was founded in 1968. The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty was again due for renewal in 1970. According to Nathan, Mishima was not thinking originally of *seppuku*: "The word constantly on his lips from the middle of 1968 to the end of 1969 was rather *kirijini*, the second form of violent death the warrior code urged *samurai* to choose when the choice of life or death presented itself." He hoped, in other words, to go down fighting in the violent demonstrations he again expected. When they did not materialise he was compelled to create his own artificial "incident." Scott Stokes adds the interesting sidelight—in view of Mishima's many other traits in common with Byron—that on a Shield Society exercise, Mishima "talked with envy of Byron, of how the poet had been able to afford to gather 300 men in his service." No doubt he also thought with envy of how the poet had been able to die on active service in a genuinely noble cause.

SCOTT STOKES does deal with the tetralogy, *The Sea of Fertility*, though long-windedly, bogging himself down in abridgements of the story. He underlines its importance in the final

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death structure by suggesting that the date of the suicide was actually determined by the date the final volume was due to be delivered. Yasunari Kawabata, the much older novelist who had befriended and encouraged Mishima from his earliest days as a professional writer and had been awarded the Nobel Prize for which Mishima himself hoped in 1968, considered that "a writer of Mishima's calibre appears only once every two or three hundred years in our history" and that the tetralogy was his masterpiece. Kawabata was however almost the only person in Japan even to mention it publicly when the first two volumes were published in book form in 1969. The Japanese critics signalled Mishima's fall from literary favour not by criticism but by silence.

THE SEA OF FERTILITY spans the whole period of modern Japanese history, from 1873, in the early years of the Meiji Era, up to the 1970s. One of the book's two major themes is the dissolution during that period of the old aristocratic culture and the values which it supported. The essence of these values for Mishima seems to be expressed in an article he wrote, quoted by Scott Stokes, about an evening in barracks with his Shield Society after a strenuous day of combat exercises, when one of the young men began to play an ancient type of flute:

> It was a beautiful and moving melody that reminded me of the heavily bedewed autumn fields and of the Shining Prince Genji who had danced to this very music. As I listened in sheer rapture, it crossed my mind that for the first time in the post-war years the two Japanese traditions had come happily together, if only for a fleeting moment—the tradition of elegance and that of the *samurai*. It was this union that I had sought in the depth of my heart.

The tetralogy's first volume, *Spring Snow*, opens ostensibly in 1911, just after the death of the Emperor Meiji, when much of the framework of feudal Japan still stood like a crumbling breakwater over the rising tide of Westernisation. But the book's opening passage is actually devoted to a photograph dated 1904, in which thousands of soldiers round a plain wooden cenotaph mourn the dead of the Russo-Japanese War. This photograph, referred to again at various points, seems to mark the last moment at which Japan as a whole was still "heroic."

The second volume, *Runaway Horses*, set in the 1930s, returns to a still earlier episode of heroism, an armed revolt by a group of *samurai* in 1873 against the removal of their ancient privileges. Those that are not killed in action commit *seppuku* and it is the account of their deaths which fires Isao, the patriot hero of *Runaway Horses*, to make his own heroically futile gesture against a corrupt government on behalf of the Emperor. The third volume, *The Temple of Dawn*, treats

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Japan in the 1939–45 War entirely unheroically, from the civilian point of view, as a waste-land of suffering and destruction. By the fourth volume, set in 1969–70, the incipient vulgarities, or pollutions, of *Spring Snow* have finally swamped the past or reduced it to a tourist industry.

The other major theme of *The Sea of Fertility* is the dissolution of the individual, but this is not immediately apparent in the first volume except in an abstract discussion about history and the individual will between the hero, Kiyoaki, and his school-friend confidant, Honda. *Spring Snow* is the most appealing of the four volumes, on the face of it a straight-forward "old-fashioned" novel about the doomed, idyllic love-affair of Kiyoaki—a Byronic version of the young Mishima—with the beautiful and impeccably aristocratic heroine, Satoko. Mishima paints the period details, particularly the traditional ceremonies, costumes and scenery, with loving care; and he is masterly at setting them off against the Rolls-Royces, billiard-tables, trivial conversation and cheap values of a Japanese Edwardian society. The book ends in a blaze of romanticism with Satoko entering a Buddhist monastery and Kiyoaki dying of tuberculosis almost at its gates.

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SPRING SNOW IS SEEN chiefly through Kiyoaki's eyes. For the remaining three volumes the main viewpoint shifts to Honda. He becomes, as it were, Kiyoaki's ghost, a walking memory of the handsome selfish youth who died at the age of twenty, surrounded by the dispiriting signs of a new age but himself enclosed as in a mediæval garden by his deliberately impossible, deliberately high-flown and archaic romance. In order to convey Honda's ghostliness, Mishima uses the idea of reincarnation. Thus through each of the three volumes there is a fresh body on to which Honda's consciousness can fasten. In the story Honda becomes convinced that Kiyoaki has been reborn when he sees the familiar pattern of three moles on each of the three bodies in succession. This is the "fairy-tale" element of the book, to which Mishima referred and which was no doubt partly responsible for its cold reception. But the importance of the idea structurally is that it separates a rational, sleepless consciousness, upon which the compromising reality of modern life constantly impinges, from a series of non-rational physical ideals which die almost at the moment they flower and whose perfection is impervious to everyday reality.

Here then is that absolute division between the classical awareness and the romantic being, or to put it another way between the writer's mind and his psychological need, which seems to be basic to an understanding of Mishima's nature. In the late essay *Sun and Steel* he isolates "two contradictory tendencies within myself. One was the determination to press ahead loyally with the corrosive function of words, and to make that my life's work. The other was the desire to encounter reality in some field where words should play no part at all." Mishima then traces, with sinister exhilaration, his attempt to escape the "white ants" of words, his steady progress in "the language of the body", through physical health, through concepts of heroic individual action (ending of necessity in death), to the action of the group, "a concept of uncommunicable shared suffering, a concept that ultimately rejects the agency of words." The whole essay is a kind of manifesto and blueprint for his suicide, but although its tone is urgently sincere, it is oddly unconvincing, as though he knew that the white ants were as active as ever.

The third volume of the tetralogy supports this impression. Indignities are now being heaped on Honda: he is in late middle-age, a voyeur, rich purely by chance, and his wife has become a shrew. But though he discovers a third body, that of a Thai princess, for his consciousness to fasten on, there can be no doubt that the physical ideal is fading, losing its reality. The Thai princess hardly exists as a character and Honda's con-

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sciousness takes the central place which was occupied in the first volume by Kiyoaki and in the second by the patriot Isao. But this third volume also takes up at some length a theme which was suggested at the end of *Spring Snow*, when Satoko entered her monastery: the Buddhist Yuishiki theory of "*alaya* consciousness." Scott Stokes considers this to be no more than a worthy effort on Mishima's part to underpin his reincarnation structure and that it fails because he does not actually believe in it. He is surely wrong. Yuishiki, in Mishima's interpretation, teaches that the world and everything in it compose a single *selfless* consciousness which manifests itself at every moment, every moment dies and is renewed. Whether or not he believed it—or perhaps wanted to believe it—the theory is integral to the development and above all the conclusion of his novel.

In *The Decay of the Angel* Honda has grown decrepit and his voyeurism is publicly exposed. Disgust with the humiliations of old age and the final destruction of Japanese culture pervades the book. The last reincarnated body, the Angel, is again a handsome young man, but this time without either will or desire. He is spoken of as "evil" and "inhuman", but he is such a faded version of the physical ideal that he scarcely seems to walk the earth. He is employed by a signal company to watch the sea for the arrival of ships: "The dregs of life on land cascaded down and came against infinity. The sea, infinity not met before. The dregs, like man, unable to meet their end save in the ugliest and filthiest of fashions." But, as in the famous *Nō* play from which the book's title comes, Honda steals the Angel's robe of immortality; he adopts him as his heir, subverts his wordless "language of the body" by giving him an ordinary education and transforms him into a slick young layabout living and decaying among the debris of suburbia. Failing to kill himself with poison, the Angel goes blind instead and the dying Honda climbs the mountain to Satoko's monastery.

THE SEA OF FERTILITY contains many passages of great beauty, but none to equal its ending. Honda and Satoko face one another across a table. Both have grown old, but in different ways. The reader has already followed in detail the slow decay of Honda, the restless, tormented individual consciousness of the whole book which has finally corroded even "the language of the body" and the ideal of action. But for Satoko, the Buddhist Abbess, "age had sped in the direction not of decay but of purification" since "Satoko had escaped the journey through the gloomy world. A person who crosses a garden bridge from shadow into sunlight may seem to change faces.

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If the beautiful young face was the face in the shadow, such, no more, was the change to the beautiful old face now in the sunlight." Furthermore she denies ever having known Kiyoaki. This is taken by Scott Stokes as a terrible blow to Honda, in that it sweeps his whole world away from under his feet. Surely it is the opposite: a relief, a lifting at last of the burden of "I." Honda goes out into the garden: "The garden was empty. He had come, thought Honda, to a place that had no memories, nothing."

Mishima does indeed seem to have been a kind of Sebastian, riddled with arrows. But if one cannot see him as more than a theatrical hero, he was perhaps a genuine martyr. He looked what he believed in the face, whether it was "*alaya* consciousness" or more likely its negative, the insupportability of his own powerful consciousness within limits he could no longer extend and which would soon begin relentlessly to contract. "Human life is limited, but I would like to live forever."

Saying No & Saying Yes

The Manners of Literary Criticism—By ANTHONY THWAITE

THOSE CRITICS AND REVIEWERS who lay down the law (which means all of us who write criticism and reviews) should now and then read or re-read the arbiters of the past. Not just the great survivors—Dr Johnson or Matthew Arnold, whatever local disagreements we may have with them, have themselves served to buttress our orthodoxies—but, more chasteningly, the great forgotten, the panjandrums and taste-makers and builders (and destroyers) of reputations who once marked out the frontiers of acceptability and who are now little more than footnotes. A short course in Francis Jeffrey, or Andrew Lang, or J. C. Squire, or Edmund Gosse might be a useful corrective to many current dogmatists. Dr Leavis's formulation ("The collaborative business that literary criticism, of its nature, is"), however accurately it reflects his years of face-to-face pedagogic practice in Downing, rather often in print turns into a version of the parental "I'm not arguing, I'm *telling* you": a tone of insistent underlining, not at all open to collaborative discussion.

Yet though Leavis has helped to establish one kind of modern orthodoxy, it is not of course the only kind. It was with Leavis in mind—as someone who is a living contradiction of the view—that Roy Fuller wrote:

> In our society a process as rigorous as any scientific law tends to make the ruling literary culture a middlebrow culture, however much its creators and arbiters see themselves otherwise.

I suppose that one of the qualities implied by "middlebrow" is a sense of accommodation, a sense of saying "yes" to culture-objects more often than "no." And here it's instructive to put side by side two passages, separated by more than seventy years.

> There are critics, of considerable acumen and energy, who seem to know no other mode of nourishing a talent or a taste than that which is pursued by the cultivators of gigantic gooseberries. They do their best to nip off all other buds, that the juices of the tree of fame may be concentrated on their favourite fruit.

> A culturally hostile atmosphere also helps to define and locate what is genuine—if you're looking for it. Take Leavis, our recent Gosse or J. C. Squire or St John Ervine inside out. How helpful his approval or disapproval has been. His blessing defined the worthless, his dismissal defined the meritorious.

The first passage is from Gosse's *Modern English Literature* (1897), the second from Geoffrey Grigson's *The Contrary View* (1974).[1] Gosse is anticipating (in a bland and ample way which is as much characteristic of a whole vanished tone of literary criticism as of Gosse alone) the sort of thing said by countless snipers at Leavis; Grigson, pushing the idea of accommodation to the limit, labels Leavis "our recent Gosse . . . inside out", a calculatedly perverse judgment but part of a lifelong campaign fought by Grigson (who was 23 when Gosse died) against what he calls "the more than usually dishonest, sticky artificiality of letters in late Victorian and Edwardian England."

But quirks of bad judgment are not as triumphantly refuted as Grigson, in his brisk but also feline way, assumes. Can Leavis's "approval" of Ronald Bottrall and L. H. Myers (if one agrees to call them "worthless") really be put in the same balance as his "approval" of Lawrence? Does his "dismissal" of Rupert Brooke and of Auden define both as "meritorious"? Similarly, with Gosse we have to face two kinds of "yes"

[1] *The Contrary View*. By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Macmillan, £4.95

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and two kinds of "no." He championed Ibsen, Gide, Stevenson, Hardy at a time when all were unknown or controversial. He was also capable of writing, in August 1917, of Julian Grenfell:

> I feel more and more strongly that "The naked earth" is the only great lyric of the War, and the only one in which the spirit of British arms is adequately transcribed.

And, in the same year, of the pseudonymous Edward Thomas:

> . . . your [W. H.] Davies, with his socks down over his ankles and no stud holding his collar, is yet an authentic poet, which Eastaway seems to me authentically *not*.

In 1910 he declared *Howards End* "sensational and dirty and affected." Fourteen years later, he wrote to Louis Gillet in France:

> I should very much regret your paying Mr. J. Joyce the compliment of an article in the "Revue des Deux-Mondes" . . . he is a literary charlatan of the extremest order. . . . There are no English critics of weight or judgment who consider Mr Joyce an author of any importance.

"Do I claim to be consistent?" asks Geoffrey Grigson enigmatically, in "Fourteen Remarks" that bring *The Contrary View* to a close in a manner both combative and open. One supposes the answer is "no", which allows for the inclusion of the presumably despised Bottrall in Grigson's *New Verse* in the 1930s, as well as the rejection of Robert Lowell's total output of poems (in a 1973 essay) as "not, I consider, just wobbly, but worthless." Leavis's "favourite fruit" (to pick up again that Gosse metaphor) has long been Lawrence, and still is. Grigson's has long been Auden, and still is. Both have been notable nippers-off of all other living buds; indeed, what strangely unites these two non-middlebrow no-sayers is that for several decades both of them have hardly been able to praise a single new talent. The first two of the *Letters in Criticism*[2] concern themselves with "trying to win recognition for Mr Bottrall": both date from 1932, and thereafter there is nothing but "a portentous lapse of standards":

> Today [1955] we have to fear that the country that in its time produced Shakespeare, George Eliot and Lawrence ("England my England!") has become, irretrievably, the country of the Welfare State, the Football Pools, and the literary culture of the *New Statesman* and the Third Programme.

In *The Contrary View*, Grigson's pantheon (of

[2] *Letters in Criticism*. By F. R. Leavis. Edited by John Tasker. Chatto & Windus, £2.60

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what he calls "Select Culture Heroes") is laid out unequivocally on page three:

> Auden, and Wyndham Lewis. Aksakov, Leskov, and Babel, Ralegh, George Herbert, Dryden, Coleridge, Hopkins (much for his letters and journals). Bruegel, Poussin, Hokusai, Corot. I suspect I should add to these Tu Fu, Wen-i-to and Pasternak, if I could read their poems other than in translation.

Putting on one side the painters (and suppressing the question "How do you manage with, say, Babel, if you can read Pasternak only in translation?"), the list looks capricious but safe. Elsewhere, Grigson is honest in showing a change of mind, or heart, about Betjeman—though on the doubtful social grounds that "the class jester is made into the court poet"; a one-step-forward about Philip Larkin in 1970 ("at any rate, making words cohere in his own way, so that you have to remember them even if you've read the poem only once") had become a three-steps-back by 1974, in a verse squib in Grigson's book of poems, *Angles and Circles*. Larkin is now "Our new Edwardian", and therefore presumably fit company for Gosse and Squire and St John Ervine. Beyond that, not the slightest acknowledgment that anything or anyone of merit has appeared since—at the latest—1940.

In one of the *Letters of Criticism* (like many of these letters to the press, it has been offensively and impudently given a title by the editor, John Tasker: "The Discrediting of Mr Grigson"), Leavis rounds on the taunting Grigson. The essay that touched off this response is collected in *The Contrary View*, and in its view of Leavis (in process of "revaluing" Eliot's criticism) "curiously exceeding the better limits of critical disagreement or exchange" there is a sense of the wheel coming back on itself, of self-styled "contrariness" biting its own hand in its fury against "a small mind, brooding and vengeful, and a frequent barbarity of taste." On neither side is there a shred of "the collaborative business"; all is point-scoring and vituperation.

Both *Letters in Criticism* and *The Contrary View* make generally dispiriting reading, because Leavis and Grigson seem to be snarling round a dried-up waterhole of their own making. Grigson sub-titles his book "Glimpses of Fudge and Gold", but the pulverising of the fudge goes far beyond the sifting of the gold, just as the redemptive or positive views in *Letters in Criticism* are very few. Almost the only living human being approved of, apart from Ronald Bottrall (and he has since been disowned), is Mr. A. J. A. Waldock, whose *Paradise Lost and its Critics* seems to have been badly reviewed by the *TLS* in 1947 and who thereby was fortunate enough to earn the commendation that he had "written a distinguished book which no one interested in Milton ought to miss."

AFTER GOSSE'S DEATH in 1928, Eliot wrote in the *Criterion* that

> the place that Sir Edmund Gosse filled in the literary and social life of London is one that no one can ever fill again, because it is, so to speak, an office that has been abolished.

Both Leavis and Grigson would say Amen to that, seeing Gosse as the supreme obstructive arbiter, a middlebrow yes-sayer with powers of approval (and disapproval) so entrenched in Establishment that for over forty years his word seemed capable of making or breaking reputations. In Clive James's *The Metropolitan Critic*,[3] the exemplary figure is Edmund Wilson, who had a literary career as long as Gosse's and a reputation as high as Leavis's, but who had neither the immediate power of Gosse nor the pervasive influence of Leavis. As James says:

> If he could only have managed to dream up an objective correlative, or a few types of ambiguity, or if he had found it opportune to start lamenting the loss of an organic society, he would be much more fashionable now than he is.

And (both giving his book its title, and underpinning it) James goes on to say that Wilson was

> the ideal of the metropolitan critic, who understood from the beginning that the intelligence of the metropolis is in a certain relation to the intelligence of the academy, and went on understanding this even when the intelligence of the academy ceased to understand its relation to the intelligence of the metropolis.

This poses the whole matter of "Grub Street *v.* Academe" (itself the title of a polemical but fair-minded essay by Peter Porter in the July 1974 issue of the *New Review*). Gosse sprang from one to the other with his usual ease, without the advantage of having been to a university in the first place, becoming Clark Lecturer at Cambridge at the age of 34. (Is there any literary figure today whom one can imagine being asked to do such a thing at such an age? Roy Fuller—of whom more in a moment—was in his mid-fifties when he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford.) Since then, the gap has widened, in spite of the profusion of reviewers from the universities—in ENCOUNTER as elsewhere. For

[3] *The Metropolitan Critic*. By CLIVE JAMES. Faber, £3.95

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Leavis, "the only conceivable organ" for "the effort to re-establish an educated, well-informed, responsible and influential public" is the university. One can't, I think, find a counter-text in Grigson, but probably only because he would find such a notion so absurd that it puts itself beyond discussion. Clive James, towards the end of his book (and it seems as a justification of all that has gone before), writes that "Taking the brunt of new creative work is one of the things literary journalism is all about", and that even at its worst literary journalism "is not so dispensable as the average of academic writing; and that at its best it is the full complement to the academy's best, the accuser of the academy's average, and the necessary scourge of the academy's worst." "Taking the brunt" is characteristically muscular James, of whom it's already been said that he makes all literary achievement sound like athletic prowess or skill at the wheel; sentences and judgments rip by with a faint smell of sweat, and the general flavour is of a panoptic, polymath highbrow who allows you to know he has aggressively lowbrow tastes as well. Far more than anything in Leavis or Grigson, one gets the impression from James of urgent despatches from the battlefield—or the boxing ring: Heaney is up, MacBeth is down, Wilbur wins, but only on points. It's all done with great dash, smartness, out of the corner of the mouth, with relish for its own vulgarities (Wilbur's "killer-diller line", Ian Hamilton as "trailblazer for his generation", Ford Madox Ford "looked like an earless Bugs Bunny on stilts . . . nevertheless the Grade A crumpet came at him like kamikazes, crashing through his upper decks in gaudy cataracts of fire"). There is a manic intelligence at work, but it *is* an intelligence, and it says "yes" much more often than "no."

With Roy Fuller, in his second and final volume of Oxford lectures on poetry,[4] the performance is a delicate but firm one, spanning the judiciousness of the university (what Clive James calls "Roy Fuller's Magisterial Thumb") and the brunt-taking of the literary journalist. Fuller is careful and accurate (one can't imagine some latterday Churton Collins effectively demolishing him on grounds of sloppy scholarship, as Collins so woundingly did with Gosse's Clark Lectures); even Leavis, in one of the *Letters in Criticism* on Fuller's lecture "The Osmotic Sap", can only cobble together a presumably rude, but obscure,

[4] *Professors and Gods*. By Roy Fuller. André Deutsch, £2.50

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sentence to the effect that Fuller's "non-literary distinction is hardly comparable to that of the collaborator in *Principia Mathematica*." All the lectures are discursive, though never in the winsome, hours-with-a-bookman way that was part of the "middlebrow culture" of Gosse's day. They draw on autobiography (particularly in "English Poetry of the Two World Wars" and "Poetic Memories of the Thirties"), but are never either arrogant or banal in doing so. The whole purpose seems to be to talk modestly but cogently from experience, a practitioner's experience; a practitioner who perhaps feels a little strange to be, by now, part of "the ruling literary culture", but who is not going to use that position to talk pap. Nor does he use it as dead cover from which to utter jeremiads: the sentence "I don't seem to find among the young now sufficient literary discrimination" may strike some people as mildly fogeyish, but that (and how true it is) is about as far as he goes in the direction of woe-saying.

IN ALL THIS SKIRMISHING across the literary-critical landscape, a final text occurs to me. Randall Jarrell (whose last collection of literary essays, gathered just before his death, has now been published)[5] supplies it in his brilliant and humane "The Age of Criticism."[6] The "independence and humility" of the final sentence in the following paragraph put in perspective the recommendations with which I began this piece: that we need to look now and then at the forgotten taste-makers of the past—partly as talisman, partly as *memento mori.*

> But one must remember (or remain a child where criticism is concerned) that a great deal of the best and most sensible criticism of any age *is necessarily absurd.* Hundreds of examples will occur to anybody: Goethe and Schiller thought so little of Hölderlin that after a while they wouldn't even answer his letters. "Ah, but *we* wouldn't have been so foolish as Goethe and Schiller", we always feel; "you won't catch *us* making that mistake." And you don't: we love Hölderlin. But some duckling we have never spared a smile for is *our* Hölderlin, and half the swans we spent our Sundays feeding breadcrumbs to will turn out to have been Southeys. And just as we will have been wrong about such people, so all of our critics will have been wrong: it's their *métier*, isn't it?—it always has been. It is easy to nod to all this as a truism, but it is hard to feel it as a truth. To feel it is to be fortified in the independence and humility that we as readers ought to have.

[5] *The Third Book of Criticism.* By RANDALL JARRELL. Faber, £4.50.
[6] In *Poetry and the Age.* Faber, 1955

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Misunderstanding Walter Bagehot

By Alastair Buchan

THE PAST TEN YEARS bear a certain similarity to their exact counterparts a century ago, the period between the end of the American Civil War (1861–65) and the depression of the 1870s. The rise in power and autonomy of the Soviet Union has had an effect on world politics not unlike the rise of Imperial Germany; there has been no cataclysm like the Franco-Prussian war but the Middle Eastern wars have been an analogue for European conflict; the sudden dominance of OPEC is not unlike the sudden dominance of the United States in agricultural exports a century ago; we face a period of prolonged recession as they faced it in the 1870s. Above all, the change in social and political attitudes and preoccupations in the period between the dominance of Harold Macmillan and the dominance of Hugh Scanlon is as marked, though quite different in character, as the contrast between the age of Palmerston and the age of Gladstone.

One falls into a trap if one tries to carry the analogy very far, let alone propounds any such syllogism as that the *Zeitgeist* of a century only becomes apparent in its eighth decade (though I would argue that what most people mean by "Victorian" or "19th-century" attitudes are primarily those of its last thirty years). But because there is a real similarity in the sense of uncertainty which intelligent people felt then about their social and political institutions and those that they feel today, it is fortunate that his newspaper should have chosen last year to publish the political and social books, essays and editorials of Walter Bagehot, the most illustrious and illuminating commentator of that period.

Bagehot, who wrote a series of biographical essays, three books on three separate subjects whose influence lasted long into this century, and at least two editorials a week for eighteen years, was a polymath in just the same way as his admiring opposite, Herbert Read (architect, artist, essayist, editor, anarchist), was one. The new edition of the biographical and literary studies was published some years ago. Here we have *The English Constitution* (1867), *Physics and Politics* (1872), and most important over two volumes of editorials on home politics, defence, foreign policy and the Empire which Norman St John Stevas has carefully ferreted out, mostly from the marmoreal bound volumes of *The Economist*.[1] There are four more volumes of economic studies yet to come, and by the time *The Economist* has finally made amends for its contemporary vulgarity by publishing the complete works of its great editor, it will be possible to form a judgment on Bagehot as a thinker and writer which earlier commentators have never really had the adequate means to do.

As one would expect from a professional politician, Norman St John Stevas (Conservative MP and an Arts and Education Minister in the Heath government) concentrates primarily on Bagehot's political writings in his Introduction and has done so with skill and knowledge. More successfully than earlier commentators, including Richard Crossman in his introduction to *The English Constitution* (which he first published in ENCOUNTER in 1963), St John Stevas has analysed the extent to which Bagehot's description of how the British political and constitutional institutions really worked, the famous dichotomy between the "dignified" and the "efficient", relied upon his social assumptions and his access to accurate information. He points out, for instance, that Bagehot underestimated the power of the Crown to interfere in those days, possibly that of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues, and certainly the impending influence of the parties. But his whole Introduction constitutes an interesting and illuminating commentary on the way in which Bagehot has and has not dated over the past century, most particularly in regard to the two elements of the constitution on which he laid greatest stress, the House of Commons and the Cabinet—as the "buckle" (or "hyphen") which bound the executive and legislative powers of government.

I HAVE SOME minor reservations about his judgments. For one thing, it is a false comparison to juxtapose the Prime Minister's private office of 60 people with the 1,292 people in the White House; for the former figure ignores the Cabinet

[1] *The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot.* Edited by NORMAN ST JOHN STEVAS. Volumes V-VIII (The Political Essays). The Economist, £25.00 (the set)

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Office which is at least as large as the President's staff. More important, although I know the Tory party is in desperate straits, is it really necessary to try and enlist into its ranks, as both his editor and Robert Blake have done, a man who has been dead for nearly a century and who several times stood for Parliament as a Liberal?

> All his life [writes Norman St. John Stevas] Bagehot was an official Liberal but his true place is within the Conservative tradition. . . . His dissenting background and the agriculturally dominated Tory party of his youth prevented any formal Tory affiliation in his lifetime, but he would have had no difficulty in linking himself with the moderate, progressive Toryism of the twentieth century, the Conservatives of Baldwin and Chamberlain, of Macmillan and Heath, of which Disraeli was the founder—one of the few contemporary facts of importance which Bagehot failed to perceive.

This will not do. Although his social views were conservative, for he had confidence in the judgment and tolerance of the Victorian middle class and a respect for the way in which it had impelled the country through the social frustration of the 1830s and 1840s, although he was critical of the shallower kinds of radical, and occasionally of Gladstone himself, his strictures on Disraeli ("a light hack in a ploughing match") were intended. Moreover, he opposed the Tories on two of the most important issues of the day; on Ireland in the 1860s and on the extension of Empire in the 1870s. He was in favour of trade unions as a means of raising real wages and defended their right to strike; he saw them as a way of preventing intimidation by employers. He thought Forster's Education Act one of the most important measures of his time, and his real contempt for Disraeli was based on his conviction that the latter had cynically extended the political franchise in 1867 in order to get mass support for social inaction: "The most ignorant and uneducated classes of England are, in the main, anti-Liberal, as in France, and it is upon this theory, as we believe, that Mr Disraeli has been resting all along. . . ."

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I think he would have said of Stanley Baldwin as he said of Lord Althorp that "it was the misfortune of his life that the simplicity of his purposes and the reliability of his character raised him at a great conjunction to a high place for which nature had not meant him", of Harold Macmillan he might have said as he did of Robert Peel that he was the perfect constitutional statesman, a man of common opinions and uncommon abilities. And among contemporaries he might have reserved his admiration for Harold Wilson, not for Edward Heath; he might have said of him as he said of Palmerston, "He had in him all that a common man has and something more." He admired those who were politically light on their feet; he was scornful of the claims of the Leader figure, stridently emphasised by Carlyle. And he was ready to consider nationalisation, at least of the railways. "It would be very difficult to transfer [ownership to the Government], we know. But when great results are *possible*, we should carefully examine whether they are not also *attainable*." This might have been written by Beveridge or even Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

THERE WAS UNTIL A GENERATION AGO a strong liberal and Liberal tradition in British politics which is now turning in its sleep as the decline of British fortunes and increasing domestic tension make the older notions of Toryism or the doctrines of the Labour party less and less relevant. It was this Liberal tradition, socially conservative though it might be, but politically innovative, to which Bagehot belonged. He was for instance an advocate of life peerages a century before they transpired. Later historians do no service to him or to the historical truth by trying to put him into a false niche.

There are other disservices which have sometimes been done to Bagehot. One has been to accuse him of being hard-hearted, best expressed in Harold J. Laski's remark that "his confidence in men—perhaps from professional bias—ceased below that stratum in society where the privilege of a bank account begins. . . ." It is true that, to quote Laski again, he had nothing of "that heedless and instinctive generosity which in men like Lincoln, Cobden, and Bright symbolised the essential morality of democratic endeavour." But there are reasons for this. One was his knowledge of France where he had seen governments overturned or hamstrung by populism. Another was his ignorance of the United States and of the way in which the tradition of "town meeting" democracy could be translated upwards to make a continental society governable. Yet another was his sense of the appalling inadequacies of the British educational system for the development of a public opinion that could

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participate in what in *Physics and Politics* he called "the Age of Discussion." Intelligent Englishmen were as puzzled or frightened by their *Lumpenproletariat* in the 1870s, as puzzled as to how to bring it within the orbit of political decision-making as intelligent Englishmen in the 1970s are frightened by the power of the trade unions or puzzled as to how to give them a constitutional role. But Bagehot's caution was more judicious and less alarmist on the subject than, say, that of George Eliot or Matthew Arnold.

THE OTHER CHARGE against Bagehot, developed at some length by Henry Fairlie in an essay in ENCOUNTER (March 1971), is that he was glib, that he was really no more than the precursor of the modern political columnist viz. Bernard Levin, Lord Chalfont, Peter Jenkins, or Henry Fairlie himself.

> We titillate, we entertain, we write *pour épater la bourgeoisie* (in the weeklies, in the quality Sundays, on television), and it is as profitable now as in his day. But, meanwhile, beyond the political processes which we describe with a thoroughness which amounts to intellectual acquiescence, wild voices can be heard, saying ignorantly or impatiently, what we have failed to say with instruction or consideration.

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In the first place, it was not very profitable then. Bagehot was paid £780 a year as Editor of *The Economist*. Second, one can only sustain this view if one reads Bagehot's journalism plus his biographical studies and ignores his other work. Certainly, he was the inventor of a number of journalistic tricks which have become standard fare; the hypothetical question, the sardonic phrase (why is there no noun called "sardony"?), the racy style. Fairlie thinks he was preoccupied with political characters but this is wrong. He had to write about them because that was how he earned his living; but I have never thought his historical or longer biographical studies his best work, strewn though they are with epigrams. The complexity of Bagehot's thought really emerges from his books, and it is one of the virtues of *The Economist* series to set out his journalism and his considered work in juxtaposition. *Physics and Politics*, though overtaken by the work of psychologists and sociologists (Jung, William James, Graham Wallas) early in this century, was for a generation almost as important a contribution to sociological theory as *The Descent of Man*. *Lombard Street* was a book that revolutionised the whole perspective on central banking, not only in Britain but elsewhere.

But there is another criticism which can be made both of Bagehot and his readers down the years. By describing our effective institutions, the Cabinet, the House of Commons, the Bank, the Civil Service, in such vivid terms; and by telling us we need not pay much attention to such ornamental features as the House of Lords, he unwittingly made three or four generations too complacent about the British constitutional system. I rarely find myself in agreement with the Hudson Institute, which has a high reputation for third-rate work, but its latest report on the decline of Britain, and the relevance of its institutions to this depressing process, has the ring of truth.[2] The failure of the House of Commons to extend the system of committee scrutiny beyond a narrow range of executive responsibilities; the inability of the Civil Service to meet the enormous increase in the demands that policy and circumstances have imposed on it; the inability of the Cabinet to act with sufficient speed or determination in a crisis, as demonstrated three times last year—over the Miners' strike in February; over the Ulster workers' strike in May; and the collapse of Cyprus in July—all of these are the consequence of a complacency about

[2] *The United Kingdom in 1980: The Hudson Report*. By EDWARD STILLMAN and others. Associated Business Programmes, £3.95, paper £1.80 paperback

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our political machinery for which Bagehot, devoted though I am to him, must bear a share of responsibility. If he were alive today he might speculate whether any element of the constitution remains "efficient." But the fact that a man as intelligent as Norman St John Stevas can find so much to echo in Bagehot's description of how the constitution worked a century ago, when the upper middle class ran the country and Britain ran the world, may reflect a political ossification from which countries which have known defeat or revolution do not suffer, and which may be at the core of many of our social and economic problems.

Natural Disorders

New Poetry—By DOUGLAS DUNN

NO MATTER how much the contemporary imagination strains for order and symmetry, its products—and this does appear to apply to all schools—are strangely broken, able to contain opposites within the one creative temperament. Iain Crichton Smith's *The Notebooks of Robinson Crusoe*[1] is a good example. At one moment his attention appears totally involved with a social poetry of characters and scenes. Yet in his title poem he is drawn towards a purely imaginative world which, if it has contemporary ramifications, is more a matter of creation than reflection from observable social surfaces.

There are sound critical reasons for wanting to see more poems by Smith that are written from the part of his imagination which finds the asocial natural to it. During several years of reviewing poetry for ENCOUNTER my most consistent suggestion has been that more social or even political reflection is needed, and that a little deliberation in these matters might not be as obstructive as is generally thought. But in Smith's case the suggestion must go the other way. That he has bravely encountered the social world with a sense of criticism and acute observation is admirable enough. The trouble is that although in such sequences as "By the Sea" his powers of observation are clear and sharp, his critical perspective is not nearly so demanding as the title of an earlier book—*From Bourgeois Land*—would suggest. Something personal gets in the way. There is a tendency to overstate, and this may well be nothing more than facility within a rough and ready practice of verse and metre leading him into a sentimental version of rhetoric. A poem like "The Workmen", for instance, while certainly warm in feeling, caricatures the free creativity of workers on a building site. Social transcendence does appear to have been intended, but the result is too controversial to be from the imagination, unless from that part of the imagination which indulges in wishful thinking more than it generates originality of point of view—

How casual their grace
though you can hear them swearing, see them mocking

the spectators down below, appalled by height
admiring for the moment the young boys
in dusty trousers, comic acrobats.

To write in that way does prove benevolent motives in Smith's outlook on the world. It also shows a failure to maintain realism parallel to the maintenance of a kindly attitude and an imaginative response to what is seen. Do building workers sing "like birds"? Are they always "natural comics"? Is their "careless poise" characteristic? *Do* they possess, even momentarily, a "glory in the sun"? The nature of these formulations may display either lack of experience or a consciousness that is too eager to convert what has been seen into the imaginative ideology of the poet.

The plainly visual, the everyday scene of the poem, is overridden for the satisfaction of ulterior motives. So much is made of it that whatever originality was in Smith's conception of the poem at its beginning rapidly undergoes linguistic and sentimental exhaustion.

Smith's lack of precision in socially reflective poems would be more serious than it is were it not for his parallel interest in a writing which encourages imagination rather than social conclusions. His poem "The Fall" is about exactly that—

The Art or life? Which is the way to go?
To hear the water breaking on far shores
is an obsession immediacy might end
by the limitations of the common door
and common windows of our common houses.
But always there's the roar of another wind
and hints and rumours of another snow
and seethings beneath ordinary surfaces.

[1] *The Notebooks of Robinson Crusoe.* By IAIN CRICHTON SMITH. Gollancz, £2.60

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Five more stanzas of similarly controlled writing within a mode more old-fashioned than traditional directs attention to a recognition of tedium instead of artistry. What the poem says is interesting, but phrases like "the common day's unquestioned light", which were brushed behind the door fifty sweepings ago, do nothing to help it. The drama of the poem's argument—that necessity to attend to both the real, observable world and the unknown—is central to Smith's work.

Using both prose and verse, Smith in his title poem dispenses with indignation, conclusions, moral evocations and sociological analyses without shedding his *bona fides* as the sort of poet for whom society is an important subject. Technically, that awkward conciliation between strict numbers and a less demanding practice of metre is tamed and Smith has the opportunity to allow his writing to follow the contours of imagination. In "Old Woman", Smith's obsessive title and subject, he does provide an example of how well he can use standard techniques.

THE WORLD'S ROOM,[2] Norman MacCaig's new book, presumably takes its title from the border ballad "Edward"—"The world's room, let them beg through life." If beggary suggests independence and enterprising improvisation, then these have been virtues of MacCaig's poetry for years. Recently he has loosened up his forms and put more faith in free verse than would have seemed likely to a reader of his earlier books. As an artificer of hard lines, regular stanzas, rhymes, MacCaig is less self-consciously brilliant than used to be the case. A characteristic poem by MacCaig holds sensuous invention and intellectual resourcefulness together as part of the one ploy. His gleeful cunning in the use of words, though now less gleeful and less cunning than in the past, is still a practice he obviously enjoys—

Impossible to call a lamb a lambkin
or say eftsoons or spell you ladye.
My shining armour bleeds when it's scratched;
I blow the nose that's part of my visor.

When I go pricking o'er the plain
I say Eightpence please *to the sad conductress.*
The towering landscape you live in has printed
on its portcullis Bed and Breakfast.

"Gone are the Days", though typical in its geniality, is less tightly organised than a poem like "Wordy Love Song." MacCaig appears as much encouraged by the opportunity to be verbally playful as to be erotic—

I'll give you a verb that's full of love
Because it's "love": but though it's love
It's sharp enough to snip the heads off
Imperfect, disgrace, deflower, unlovely.

Then what a singing of sighs, a consort
Of hands and lips. And we'd compose then
(Putting our heads and hands together)
The tremblingest, truest, long life sentence.

Always attentive to turning reality upside down, inside out and outside in by a process of verbal wit, this has meant in MacCaig's work a fidelity to inspiring landscapes and places rather than social conscience. The poetry does not suffer because of that. The pictorial triumph that ends "Blackbird in a Sunset Bush" is proof enough—

The gravity of beauty—
how thoughtfully, how pensively he puts it,
charcoal philosopher
in his blazing study—

which has the disinterested charm and detachment that marks his best work. Interestingly, it survives his adoption of freer forms, which does say something about rhyme and metre.

I can praise
What never was tortured between true and false,

he says in "One Way Journey." Much of MacCaig's poetry fits into that area, an amoral, imaginative territory of mind, landscape and creatures. In "Progress" and "Aesthetics" he is more critical, attempting to dissociate himself from the obstructively mundane. The imaginative-intellectual harmony he wants, and in his best poems achieves, has led him into a colloquial surrealism in "Between Two Nowheres." A civilised dignity about his writing prevents him from taking even that tentative surrealism to the lengths that might be possible for a younger poet. *The World's Room* is the best of his recent collections; it has the sureness of thought, confidence, and hardness of line Iain Crichton Smith seldom manages, though Smith does possess a social eagerness and capability MacCaig has never

[2] *The World's Room.* By NORMAN MACCAIG. Chatto & Windus, £1.50

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considered natural to his own writing. It would be nice to have a Scottish poet called "MacSmith."

OVER A LONG CAREER Geoffrey Grigson[3] has behaved according to strict principles in criticism and scrupulousness in the art of writing poems. Technically, his poems can only be described within the orders and manners of a wholly individual handling of rhythms and subjects. In his angular lyrics his rhythms, if odd at first to the ear, are also precise with that unexpected accuracy found only in the work of poets for whom an organically rhythmic writing is primary among their technical concerns, and in which regulation is invented, or discovered, or, if identifiable metres are used, overcome. In this example, a whole poem called "Evenings", Grigson's method achieves simplicity of the sort entirely native to verse in English, and perhaps to the language itself—

Dawns being after all on tap
Wheresoever we are,
Admit to me when you last saw
The Morning Star?

Living inside our
Port-holed ark
We see with despondence
Every day go dark.

In his offended satirical blastings at Alvarez and Larkin, skill and mischief are part of the same explosive parcel. There will be some anxious to toe Grigson's lines here. But that side of his poetic personality given over to bawling "No!" is, as it must be, the least attractive. His best thoughts are confirmations of a resolute will to live. He insists on a sensuous acceptance of nature, the countryside, and love. His typical regret, as, though mutedly, in "Evenings", is at refusals to seize the wholeness of life and "natural best being." Unlike so many poets whose assumptions are directed towards "liberation" and happiness, Grigson's life-philosophy is coherent. It is only in his literary satires that he loses his characteristic tenderness. These satires are undoubtedly immediate in relation to his view of life. Yet when he writes of the thwarted happiness of a French craftsman in "Quel Histoire", it is with such a moving wholeness of sympathy and regret that I can hardly draw any other conclusion than that *literary* satire is too closely involved with the savagery of its traditions to be capable of any conclusions other than distorted ones.

POETS LIKE Iain Crichton Smith, George Mackay Brown, Norman Nicholson and Richard Murphy have cultural and local ties that make them peripheral to whatever in contemporary cultural life can be called central. Not only a Scot, Smith speaks and writes in Gaelic, and is part of the renewal of Gaelic poetry. Geography alone would be enough to secure the distance between Brown and the expectations of metropolitan taste. It is this persistence of Scotland, Ireland and Wales in our times as culturally separate entities—at once impudent and glorious—which makes a mockery, for many of the poets who live there, of the recent demands that a theoretical imagination be known as the True Style of the Age in poetry. The relaxation from pressures of place and history that may well be required for that suggestion to be valid simply does not exist for a poet like Richard Murphy,[4] whose locality is the west coast of Ireland. "Tradition" is less vague for Murphy, less like ideology, and much less involved with political associations that are certainly implicit in some English interpretations of the idea. When "tradition" is obvious in place, landscape, language and character, or in the closeness of "folk art" to "Art", then it is a phenomenon to be taken into account and perhaps even cherished.

[3] *Angles and Circles.* By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Gollancz, £2.60

[4] *High Island.* By RICHARD MURPHY. Faber, £1.25

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Poetry as craft is a peculiarly Irish understanding of it. It is a way of practising poetry upheld by Seamus Heaney as well as Richard Murphy. Indeed, in countries or regions where there actually are craftsmen employed in the rural trades, where there are fishermen and ploughmen, boatwrights and men skilled in traditional ways of working with stone, to see the poet as a craftsman is to suggest a socially binding role.

Belief in craft, however, does not absolve a poet from the possibility of writing not entirely successful poems. Murphy's longer poems do encourage him to unload metaphorical slack, an example of which can be seen in the first verse of "Seals at High Island." His shorter poems avoid that. "Lullaby" is as pure and sweet as X. J. Kennedy's little poem "Elegy." "Jurors", too, a bewildered lament for the old world, is a narrative lyric of great beauty, and it is from simplicity and directness rather than more elaborately designed poems that Murphy can draw his best lines, though in the long poem of his previous book, *The Battle of Aughrim*, he frequently succeeded in writing at length with that same simplicity and assurance which are distinctive in "Song for a Corncrake" and "Granite Globe" in *High Island*.

QUIZZICAL, quick, cosmopolitan, and a user of several different styles of writing, Herbert Lomas[5] is virtually Richard Murphy's opposite. Craft is replaced by more urban principles such as cleverness, adaptability and improvisation. For instance, Lomas not only writes a *faux naif* light verse in the cheeky English manner—all innocent one minute, and knowing the next—but is drawn towards intensely imaginative short lyrics as well.

Anger is usually understated in political poems like "In Spite of Everything Most of the Middle Classes Never Get Hurt", or " 'Avarice & Usury & Precaution Must Be Our Gods For a Little Longer Still'." He is too concerned with being inventive to approach these subjects other than on their flanks. Feigned innocence of imagination confronts pain and perplexity in "The Byways of Desire" and "A Night at the Astral." Vulnerability before experience, and the largeness of existence with its togetherness of threats and exhilarations, is a consistent theme. Like Peter Porter, he frequently invents stories, or "fictions", as in "Short Story", and he does seem a similar kind of poet to Porter, though more humble in scale. At times, too, his sense of humour works like D. J. Enright's, recognising the bothersome in such a way that sanity is preserved and hysteria put off until tomorrow. As with Enright, and occasionally in Peter Porter's poems, the writing sometimes looks like a juggling with the superficial. At least one finger, though, is kept free to point towards the profound or disturbing.

In spite of his inclination to be talkative, Lomas impresses most when he allows his imagination the freedom it deserves. From "Clear Night"—

> *On a night like this*
> *Dead people*
> *Can use the moonlight*
> *Like a telephone.*

Lomas's varieties, more extreme than that clash of imagination and society in Smith's work, put the dilemmas of the contemporary poet on show. One impulse makes him write political verse, light verse, socially reflective verse. Another obliges him to satisfy his admiration of Horace's *Odes* by imitating a few examples. Another makes him willing to surrender to perceptions his imagination offers for the taking. He can be subjective and autobiographical as well as more generously objective. Free verse suits him when he thinks it necessary, as well as the fascination of trying out traditionally versed procedures. Tradition, if you like, is honoured by the same hand that doesn't care if it is seen to subvert it as well.

[5] *Private and Confidential.* By HERBERT LOMAS. London Magazine Editions, £1.00

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MEMOIR

Cyril Connolly

By Peter Quennell

MY FRIENDSHIP WITH Cyril Connolly, one of the most interesting and rewarding associations of my life, continued over fifty years. I met him in the autumn of 1923, soon after I had gone up to Balliol; I saw him for the last time only a few months ago, when he was about to leave England on what proved to be a fatal journey; and we then agreed that we must meet again as soon as he returned home. Our last conversation was by telephone between his Weymouth Street clinic and my Chelsea house. His voice was barely audible and, at some moments, indeed, scarcely recognisable. But he said he was sorry that, when I visited the clinic a day or two earlier, he had not been well enough to see me; and I promised I would pay him another visit next week. Until then, I bade him goodbye; and he repeated the word "goodbye" with what I felt to be a tragic emphasis.

During that half-century our relationships, and, naturally, the course of Cyril's own life, went through many different stages. At Oxford, he was a slim, alert young man, a brilliant member of the undergraduate coterie that "Sligger" Urquhart, the youth-loving Dean of our college, used to assemble in his rooms. He was irreverent, gaily cynical, though deeply devoted to one or two gifted friends he had brought with him from Eton, a focus of wit and ribald gossip, and a source of learned information about Greek and Roman literature. He read and quoted the works of Petronius, while most of his contemporaries, including myself (whose knowledge of the classics was far less extensive, and who had never learned to write Greek verse) were still worshipping at the shrines of Keats and Shelley.

The attribute I found especially agreeable, however, was his gift of lending a poetic aura to every experience that came his way. Through his imaginative eyes one saw the world afresh; and when we explored together the reaches of the Oxford Canal—we despised the commonplace charms of the Isis and the Cherwell—he recorded his impressions in a characteristic letter, afterwards reprinted in an article:[1] "I haunt the Oxford Canal", he wrote, "where the squat tower of the Castle looks more like Provence than anything . . . old houses, flowering chestnut and lilac hang over the dirty water and music comes from ancient inns." And he proceeded to cite some beautiful verses by the Chinese lyricist Li Po, recently translated by Arthur Waley.

ON LEAVING OXFORD, for the first and almost the last time in his life, Cyril was obliged to adopt a thoroughly uncongenial occupation. But he soon escaped, secured the post of aide-de-camp and amanuensis to the fastidious Anglo-American littérateur Logan Pearsall Smith, who gave him a small but adequate salary and all the independence that he needed, and presently married a charming American girl, in whose company he travelled around Europe and, at regular intervals, set up house in London, where they entertained a multitude of friends.

This was perhaps his calmest and happiest period, during which, he says, he "lived for beauty", surrounded by the beloved pets, particularly a pair of semi-domesticated ring-tailed lemurs, that became an important part of his existence. In those days, I think, he was as near to contentment as he was ever capable of being. But then, Cyril was a born Romantic; and I used to annoy him by reciting Shelley's lines:

> *We look before and after,*
> *And pine for what is not:*
> *Our sincerest laughter*
> *With some pain is fraught. . . .*

and suggesting that they perhaps recalled his own emotional vicissitudes.

He indignantly denied the resemblance, and said he supposed I thought that *I* was a representative of classicism; which, judging by the absurd untidiness of my private life, I quite obviously wasn't. Yet in *The Unquiet Grave* I find a significant passage: ". . . 'Living for beauty': in one lovely place always pining for another; with the perfect woman imagining one more perfect. . . ." *The Unquiet Grave* is not only a lament for lost happiness, but provides a clue to the emotional unrest that had slowly brought about its ruin. Cyril was seldom content with what he had, and perpetually dreamed either of what had been, or, given other circumstances,

PETER QUENNELL *is the editor of "History Today". He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford and published his first book of poems in 1926. Among his other books are: "Byron in Italy" (1941), "Mayhew's London" (1954), "Hogarth's Progress" (1955), and "Marcel Proust" (1971).*

[1] Published by *Harper's Magazine* (June 1973).

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might be. He liked to introduce an element of fine complexity into any sentimental relationship that he had built up; and Palinurus, tells us that he produced his famous book while, "as a man, he was suffering from a private grief—a separation for which he felt to blame. . . ."

YET IT WAS TOWARDS the close of his first happy marriage, when disruptive influences were already working, that he wrote his admirable *Enemies of Promise* (1938), and during a later crisis, to exorcise his sense of guilt, that he composed *The Unquiet Grave* (1944–45). Cyril needed a problem; there must always be two faces haunting his imagination, two magnetic poles pulling at his heart and dividing his allegiance. The Cyril of *The Unquiet Grave*, dominated by his memories of the past, his fear of the future and his fierce dislike of the present day, remained with us until the end. This is not the place to analyse his character; but I believe that certain of its aspects—the most typically "Palinuroid" traits—sprang from his early belief, right or wrong, that his mother had deserted him. Mrs Connolly, whom I once met, was a dignified, attractive woman; Major Connolly, a mildly eccentric and slightly unattractive figure, who spent his mornings at the Natural History Museum, where he classified the shells of snails (on which he was a renowned authority), his afternoons at the Windmill Theatre, inspecting its scantily clothed girls, and his evenings eating a modest dinner at a small "family" hotel in South Kensington. The Connollys had parted while their son was still a boy; and Mrs Connolly had gone abroad. Hence, I think, Cyril's enduring dread of desertion; which he aggravated by a tendency to provoke the crises most likely to imperil his domestic peace of mind.

SO FAR I have dwelt, possibly at excessive length, on the gloomier side of Cyril's life. Despite his woes, which he never hesitated to advertise, he had a marvellous sense of fun, and, despite his prejudices, which were often wildly savage, an enormous generosity. He gave splendid presents—I own a number of valuable books allusively inscribed by him; and he loved to hold a party. He was a natural host, whereas I am a natural guest; and he derived unfailing pleasure from his friends' enjoyment. His moods varied; but if he were in a blithe mood—and, had he been offended or disappointed, the company soon became aware of it—no one could be funnier. His jokes were sometimes cruel; but then, he was equally cruel upon the subject of himself; and he was the only man I have ever met who could make a pun amusing. Not that, like Oscar Wilde, he put his talents into his work, and his genius into his life. His conversation and his literary work had very much the same qualities—a similar verve and penetrative insight, which went straight to the centre of the topic under discussion and quickly turned it inside out. Writing newspaper articles was a task he found tedious; and he would sometimes review a book that had evidently bored him. "Cyril isn't trying", one said as one read the first few paragraphs; until a sudden flash of humour or an unexpected image revealed the artist hidden behind the journalist. Here and there he was apt to overpraise, because an author had aroused his per-

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sonal sympathies, or launched a pleasant train of thoughts. But he had no patience with modish pretensions, vapid theorising or imperfect scholarship. Certain best-selling writers, whom he had offended, saw in him their arch-enemy.

His victims were frequently moved to protest that, considering the critical weight he carried, he had not published many books himself. This he freely admitted. He was "a lazy, irresolute person", he agreed, "over vain and over modest, unsure in my judgments and unable to finish what I have begun." He lacked the stubborn mechanical energy that carries most of us along; for Cyril was both a perfectionist (who declared in *The Unquiet Grave* that "the more books we read, the clearer it becomes that the true function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece, and that no other task is of any consequence") and a hedonist who could only set to work in a propitious frame of mind and amid appropriate surroundings. Once, I recollect, an unwary publisher commissioned him to write a travel-book. He duly visited the places he had promised to describe, taking with him the attractive young woman he had engaged to supply a series of photographs. But, on his return, he gaily informed the publisher that he could not possibly fulfil his contract; he had fallen in love with his photographer, he announced, and was feeling "far too happy." Though the publisher had often heard his authors explain that they could not complete a job because they were too ill or wretched, this was his first experience of encountering an excessively euphoric writer; and it so bewildered him that he decided to abandon the struggle, and forget the sum he had advanced.

YET CYRIL SUCCEEDED in producing a small group of books that, I am sure, will keep his name alive. The autobiographical chapters he added to *Enemies of Promise* give us a brilliantly detailed picture of the early Georgian period; his volumes of collected essays are full of good things, which include some of the finest modern parodies yet written; and *The Unquiet Grave* is undoubtedly the masterpiece (albeit a minor masterpiece. But does it signify, after all, whether a genuine work of art is big or little?) that he had always dreamed that he might one day produce. Nobody else could have composed it, or, indeed, any book remotely like it. His celebrated "word-cycle", from beginning to end, is an essential expression of his character, of his vitality and his sloth, his gaiety and his melancholy, his classical humanism and his dark romantic pessimism, all rendered into clear and elegant prose. Cyril's distinctive voice sounds from every page of the volume. I find it difficult to remember that, in ordinary social life, at a club, a dinner-party or the corner of a London street, I shall never hear that voice again.

Friend of Promise

By John Lehmann

TO MOST READERS under 50 today, I imagine Cyril Connolly was the magisterial critic of the *Sunday Times* (London), erudite and entertaining at the same time, who had highly individual tastes in many things beside literature, who wrote like an angel and liked to be a bit of a buffoon. And people also almost certainly remember him as the wit who coined an epigram that has entered the storehouse of the English language: "In every fat man there is a thin man struggling to get out."

If he had died twenty years ago, he would have been thought of above all as the Editor of *Horizon*, that literary magazine which had done so much to keep the Philistines at bay during the War, and whose rich harvest was so dazzlingly displayed in his anthology *The Golden Horizon*. Fifteen years earlier still, in 1939, he would have been mourned as the author of *Enemies of Promise*, a book that delighted a whole intellectual generation by its witty exposure of the pitfalls in the literary career and the mixed pains and pleasures of an English Public School education.

Cyril Connolly was, in fact, a man of many gifts and diverse ambitions. In an article on André Gide's *Les Faux Monnayeurs* (*The Counterfeiters*, 1925), one of his best though perhaps not the last word on that seminal novel, he described Gide as "the apostle of the Hybrids", and wrote:

> "The Hybrid is perpetually haunted by a conviction of exile, his spirit is expended in home-sickness, his intellect in trying to discover what is his home. . . . With spiritual hybrids it is worse. Homeless since the loss of Eden, these Cains and Ishmaels acquire a conviction of guilt as profound as their sensation of exile. This leads to a passionate curiosity that sends them experimenting everywhere to find out where they belong, but dictated as it is by conscience, and not by science, it trails away into sensationalism, or dies on the rich luxurious wail that is the war-cry of these dangerously articulate people, and which, loaded with lyric beauty and self-pity, must surely drown all refrains of hymns and psalm tunes. . . ."

This description of the Hybrid seems to me in some ways truer of Connolly himself than of Gide, particularly in such phrases as "conviction of guilt", "sensation of exile", or "the rich luxurious wail", "loaded with lyric beauty and self-pity." Since his death, I have been thinking about the phases of his life, especially where they intersected with my own, and trying to determine

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in which, of all the many homes he sought, he found that to which he truly belonged—if indeed he ever found out.

In the autobiographical part of *Enemies of Promise* (1938), called "A Georgian Boyhood", he describes how, after a pretty hellish first two years at Eton, he became rather a dandy, popular in spite of being no good at games, and by his sophistication, his mocking tongue, and capacity for being funny, became a member of the exclusive society of "Pop" with all its privileges including that of wearing fancy waistcoats. It is just so that I remember him, standing outside his study and teasing me, a new boy, head of my Election (that is, my year) and therefore vested with a certain limited authority. The grin on his always cat-like face confused me, and in my innocence I didn't know how to cope with the teasing; but there was never any trace of bullying about it.

His success at Eton marked him. He was confirmed in his belief that it paid to be funny, and the habit of being a jester never left him. When he wrote parodies or send-ups in later life, they always, it seems to me, had an element of schoolboy clowning about them. In fact it became a weakness rather than a virtue, something he'd fall back on when a book he was reviewing bored him.

The other, much more important thing he learnt at Eton was to love the classical writers of Greece and Rome. This, I believe, was deep and fertilising, and gave him his understanding of style as well as his life-long attachment to civilised pagan values. Homer, Virgil, Lucretius, Horace, Catullus, and the Greek Anthology: as he confessed in the last article he ever wrote, these were his touchstones all through his career, though, perhaps surprisingly, he added Petronius to them.

He once told me that he would have liked, almost more than anything else, to have been able to visit the picture gallery filled with Greek masterpieces that Encolpius wanders into in the *Satyricon*. And, only a few years ago, he discovered in my library an original 18th-century edition of the fragments, the first English translation in fact; and he asked me to leave it to him in my will. I wish I had given it to him then and there.

WHEN HE LEFT Eton, in the early 1920s, he went up to Oxford, which provided him with what was in a way an ideal existence: good living, an appreciative audience, the vision of a sparkling literary career stretching out before him, and no nonsense about hard work. He made a lot of new friends, to add to those he had made at Eton, and most of them remained so for life. The difficulties started after he went down. He became for a time secretary to that rich and fastidious, aphorism-collecting man of letters, now so little remembered, Logan Pearsall Smith. This was undoubtedly good for him in his training as a stylist: he learnt to be acutely aware of the ambushes of cliché that lie in wait for the budding young writer, especially if he starts his career in journalism and reviewing. But he had discovered that he was a *gourmet*; and that implied plenty of money which he didn't have, or singing for his supper at which he had become an adept, even if it wasted his time.

And he also discovered that his own especial deadly sin was Sloth. In his Introduction to *The Condemned Playground* (1944) he wrote:

> "Like most critics I drifted into the profession through a lack of moral stamina: I wanted to be a poet, and to revive the epic; I wanted to write a novel about Archaic Greece—but my epic and my novel fell so short of the standards which my reading had set me that I despaired of them, and, despairing, slipped into the interim habit of writing short-term articles about books. . . . I wish I had been a better critic and that I had not written brightly, because I was asked to, about so many bad books."

In his diary extract, "England, Not my England", also included in *The Condemned Playground*, he paints a vivid picture of his state of mind between 1927 and 1929. He already shows unmistakable traits of the Hybrid, "a profound sensation of exile . . . conviction of guilt", and a restless uncertainty about his real home, spiritual as well as material. He speaks of his love of England; and immediately after of the nausea it inspires in him, all the horrors of which Paris, in his simplifying mood of revulsion, seems to be wonderfully free. He confesses that he suffers from persecution mania, a trait that I believe was always to stay with him, and was the cause of the coldness, even rudeness, that he was apt to display at social gatherings.

At the beginning of 1929 he makes a resolve: "To be altogether more advanced and intelligent, to have more friendships and fewer affairs, to write and read more than I eat and drink, to revisit Paris and write a prize novel. . . ."

Not long after, he did write a novel, *The Rock Pool* (1935), which eventually came out in Paris because English publishers found it too "indecent." How odd that objection seems today! The very occasional success of the unfortunate hero, or anti-hero, in getting into bed with one of the pretty expatriate girls of Trou-sur-Mer, who nearly all turn out to be in love with one another, would not raise an eyebrow in the '70s; nor did it, apparently, in 1947 when it at last found a publisher over here. But *The Rock Pool* was not the prize novel he wanted to write; light and entertaining enough, it nevertheless showed few of the gifts that go to make a born

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novelist. Many years later, after the last War, he started another novel, parts of which were published serially, but he never finished it. I remember him telling me once that he had thought of a brilliant idea for a new novel, but his imagination conjured up the scenes in it so vividly that he just lay on his sofa chuckling to himself. Not a word was ever set down on paper. Sloth again? Partly; but rather, I think, lack of aptitude. The novel was not to prove the home he was looking for.

A COUPLE OF YEARS LATER, he brought out *Enemies of Promise*. One of Cyril's bravest assertions was that the only point of writing was "to write a masterpiece." *Enemies of Promise* seemed at the time very nearly that. I remember what pleasure it gave me to find the poison weeds that rise up to choke young writing talent—the temptations of politics, or journalism, of day-dreaming and drink and many other snares, so precisely labelled for the time, so wittily analysed, and yet with such bitter passion. And the first part, *Predicament*, with its division of contemporary writers into the Mandarin and Vernacular, I found full of exciting insights. Re-reading it today, however, I am disappointed to find some of the generalisations far too sweeping and even slapdash, and some of the judgments distinctly dated. Again, many of the "enemies"—though there are still plenty of them around—have changed with the times.

I have already mentioned the long autobiographical essay "*A Georgian Boyhood*," which still seems to me the best piece of writing in the book. With its candour, its amusing frankness, especially about the effect on intelligent schoolboys of Falernian draughts of Roman poetic philosophy about sex and the enjoyment of life, it showed not only an absence of the usual old boy's sentimentality but a deep feeling for the value of friendship. I believe he could have gone on from there, at a later stage in his life, to write a full summing-up—*that* could have been the true masterpiece within his grasp.

HE HAD BEEN WORKING for the *New Statesman*, but the opportunity to escape from the treadmill of weekly journalism came very soon after, when he and his well-to-do friend Peter Watson, with the initial help of Stephen Spender, decided (just before the 1939 War broke out) to found the monthly magazine *Horizon*. "A Review of Literature and Art" the first number announced, and "our standards are aesthetic and our politics are in abeyance." I had been editing *New Writing* for several years by then, and the idea grew up, perhaps because Spender had been one of my closest collaborators, that some feud-to-the-death existed between the two editorial offices. A friendly rivalry certainly existed which was probably good for us both. I think the tone of the two magazines was sharply different, especially when *Penguin New Writing* was born out of the old hard-cover series; but in fact, as far as contributors went, we constantly overlapped. How could that fail to be so, as we had so many friends in common among the younger writers? In any case as the War went on and paper rationing and other production troubles threatened our existence, Cyril and I were driven closer together. *Horizon* had, I thought, a chancy brilliance. There were periods when Cyril seemed to have lost the keen interest of the early days, though he could make up by the wit and flavour of his own "Comments."

In one thing, however, he remained unshakable: the conviction that the freedom of writers to express themselves as they felt must always be defended against the war bureaucrats and hyper-patriots who hated it. The castigator of the Enemies of Promise had become the friend of promise indeed, and in the most difficult circumstances.

Cyril finally got bored. One could make out a case for his editorship of *Horizon* being his greatest contribution to letters in his time; but by 1949 he was restless and dissatisfied again. "Cyril must have a break" was the theme of his helpers—though I was inclined to think that some of them needed a rest more than he did. He let it be known that he was planning to take a sabbatical year off. Of course this was impossible. An editor as personal as he was can't just disappear for twelve numbers and then start again where he left off. Cyril came to realise this. A few months later, over a bottle of wine at my club, he offered me *Horizon* at a reduced price. I could not find the money, but in any case I doubt very much if it would have been a sensible plan to pursue. Cyril bade his magazine farewell with a characteristic cry of picturesque but exaggerated doom:

> "It is closing time in the gardens of the West, and from now on an artist will be judged only by the resonance of his solitude or the quality of his despair."

THE UNQUIET GRAVE, "a word-cycle by Palinurus", first appeared as a publication by *Horizon* in 1944. How strange that this plangent primer of *angst*-ridden hedonism should appear in the year of D-Day—a contrast that startled many readers whose emotions were far more engaged with the fortunes of their friends and relations in the final battles against the

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Nazis on the other side of the Channel than in such heavy lament for the lost pleasures of peace-time lotus-eating. But there was more to it than that. Cyril was pitting his own powers as an aphorist against the French masters, in particular Saint-Beuve and Chamfort. It was a brave effort, but I don't think it really stood up to its pretensions. The tone still seems today, as it did then, too self-indulgently nostalgic, dying on that "rich luxurious wail loaded with lyric beauty and self-pity" that he had long before spotted as a characteristic of the Hybrid.

It was beautifully written and more, gave fascinating illustration to a side of his complex temperament that had been growing since Oxford: an empathy with the world of exotic plants and fruits and those frail wild animals, such as lemurs, which have an almost human look of poignant doom about them. I have often wished that he had written more about them, though he sometimes returned to the subject in the weekly articles he began to write for the *Sunday Times* soon after *Horizon* folded. I can envisage a quite special and unique book about his feelings for the rarer side of nature—or perhaps it might have been an important part of that summing up he never got down to. There is something almost tragically ironic about the fact that Cyril, who affected to despise collections of journalism, did nothing but publish such collections of his own journalism in the last phase of his life. Necessity drove: how much more than Maugham (whom he admired too unreservedly) did he deserve riches, ease, and freedom in his last years.

THE LAST OCCASION I was with Cyril for any length of time was, oddly enough, in Texas, in the spring of 1971. The Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas had prepared a magnificent exhibition to illustrate the "Hundred Key Books" that he had chosen in his monograph on *The Modern Movement*, and invited him over to Austin for the opening. I was working as a Visiting Professor there at the time, and we were constantly in one another's company. I often wondered how the craze for making such catalogues had taken hold of him (for it started very early on, in the pages of *Enemies of Promise*). If it had been called "Cyril Connolly's favourite hundred books in the Modern Movement" it would have been a truer description. All his choices were English, American, or French. He excused himself for this; but all the same a modern movement without Bunin, or Rilke, or Kafka, or Svevo, or Cavafy was hardly a complete panorama.[1] In any case, the exhibition honoured the book in spectacular fashion.

I BEGAN THESE REFLECTIONS on Cyril Connolly's career with the feeling that with all his gifts he never found a proper home, the ideal containing vessel for them. And yet the very diversity of his attempts created something else, a home with many unfinished rooms, stamped with a unique personality, a not to be despised achievement in itself. The Austin exhibition provided a kind of apotheosis for Cyril as critic, arbiter of taste, and bibliophile. Only Texas could have put it on. It was a joy to see Cyril going round the show-cases, lovingly fingering first editions, original *MSS*, and corrected proofs of the books that had meant so much to him during his life, and whose authors he had in so many cases known personally. It didn't give him any chance to display his deep love of the French masters of the 17th and 18th century. But it went quite a long way, I thought, to make up for his not being able to visit that gallery of masterpieces described in the *Satyricon*.

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, Frank Kermode's critique "Modernisms", March and April 1966.

To Hell with Masterpieces

By J. W. Lambert

WHEN I WAS A SCHOOLBOY, in the early 1930s, I gobbled up not only books but all the literary journalism I could find—most of it in a remarkably well-stocked school library. One day I got a nasty shock. Some chap called Connolly was being beastly about one adolescent's favourite poet—A. E. Housman. John Sparrow, already known to me because he used to come and make a speech in Latin on founder's day, rushed to the defence; and I had no trouble in awarding him the victory. But somehow or other I was, as it turned out, hooked on the vile iconoclast, and from then on read his writing wherever I could find it.

Naturally, therefore, I became a subscriber to *Horizon* the moment it was announced, and remained one until it expired. By that time Connolly was an eagerly awaited, immensely stimulating companion, although I had never

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met him, and hardly any other writers. As it happened, the first writer I did eventually meet knew my hero well, and increased as much as he satisfied my curiosity. I had written to Logan Pearsall Smith because I thought it might amuse him to hear of an Ordinary Seaman reading *Milton and his Modern Critics* while swinging in his hammock on the forecastle of a cruiser far up in the Arctic Circle. It did, and I took to visiting the old monster in his eyrie in St Leonard's Terrace whenever leave or posting took me through London.

Either up in his crowded sitting-room or on what he called his "bench of desolation" in the gardens opposite, a few hairs nodding from his bald scalp like antennae, he would unfold for me a literary wonderland in which talent and malice walked hand in hand, and famous names took on a bizarre reality. One of them was Connolly's. Twenty years before, it seemed, two especially brilliant young men had come upon Logan's scene. One was Kenneth Clark, who went off to Italy and the hallowed shrine of the divine Bernard Berenson; the other was Cyril Connolly, who came and devilled for my host. "Not an ideal secretary," he said, musing. "It was asking too much to send him, even when his natural lethargy had worn off, to the London Library to look things up for me. There was too much there to distract his own omnivorous attention. He usually came back full of some curious discovery, but having altogether forgotten my own modest requirements. . . ." Yet there was a fondness in the old gentleman's eye, a satisfaction in a talent well and truly spotted.

Time passed, and although he was still the only writer I knew I began to find the malice in Logan's conversation more saddening than stimulating. Somehow I ceased to see him, and the world of letters receded. But not for long: a series of lucky chances led me to the *Sunday Times* as assistant to Leonard Russell, the Literary Editor. Our principal book reviewer then was Desmond MacCarthy, a wheezing old enchanter whom I was proud to serve. He was soon joined by one of his own disciples, Raymond Mortimer, at first I must say a formidable presence. Years later Violet Trefusis published her memoirs. A striking passage described how she quailed when talking to her old friend Raymond, observing him twitching with impatience as he waited for her to finish her banal remarks. Wondering whether to review the book, Cyril picked it up—and instantly decided not to. Still, I showed him the paragraph about his old friend and colleague. "I know what she means," I said, adding hopefully, "don't you?" "Yes," said Cyril, and added, his face already beginning to crumple with glee, "but not as well as you do, I hope. . . ." But then, several years later still, I had occasion to telephone Raymond Mortimer one Friday morning. His conversation was none too coherent, and eventually he said, "I'm afraid I'm not making much sense. The fact is, Cyril's coming to stay for the week-end, and I'm absolutely terrified."

WHEN, IN THE EARLY 1950s, I learnt that Connolly, another of Desmond's disciples, was going to join us on the book pages of the *Sunday Times* I too was as much alarmed as excited. Admiration had of course mounted steadily; young Lambert had wallowed in *Enemies of Promise, The Condemned Playground, Horizon,* and *The Unquiet Grave*—often rather against his will, or at any rate his judgment, since he felt, as his ageing self still feels, that a preoccupation with masterpieces betrays both decadence and lack of confidence in one's own cultural digestion. But such a gift of phrase, of rhythm, of imagery, of sudden everyday perception . . . but then (already, as it were, an assistant stage manager in the wings of the literary scene) I had heard tales of difficulties, of arrogance, of elusiveness. "It'll be one man's work," somebody said, "to get anything out of him." This turned out, let me say at once, to be totally untrue.

By the time he wrote his first piece for the *Sunday Times* in his long post-war association I had still not met him. I did meet, one day, a little old lady with whom I had what seemed to me, and perhaps to her, a most agreeable conversation. "I am giving a little party," she said. "Perhaps you would care to come." Of course I would. But who was she? Dorothy Bussy, our common friend replied, kindly adding, in the face of my blank reception of this news, "the sister of Lytton Strachey." I went in due time trembling off to a tall, gloomy house in the heart of Bloomsbury. My little hostess greeted me kindly, but I was soon submerged in a crowd of unknown persons. Alongside me, after a while, I noticed a crumpled, beaky figure, also not talking to anybody else—though not, I felt, because he was a stranger. "Good evening," I said. "I feel sure that everybody here is extremely interesting, but I cannot identify them. If you do not think the request impertinent, could you perhaps attach some names to these faces?" "With pleasure," he replied, in a high, rather finicking voice. "Well now, there's Duncan Grant, and of course Vanessa Bell . . ." and so on round the room. "I can't help feeling," I said, "that I ought to know your name?" "Well, perhaps. My name is Waley." Overcome with awe, I began babbling some rubbish about Li Po. Arthur Waley, doubtless relieved by a sudden chance of escape, interrupted. "Ah, now there's somebody quite differ-

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ent. I'm not sure that he quite fits in here, but still. . . ." It was Cyril Connolly. I might as well, I thought, introduce myself to him, especially since I had in any case been going to telephone him in the morning with a slightly awkward question. Haltingly I did so. My reverential quacks were civilly but indifferently received. My expressions of the extreme gratification I felt in his joining us on the *Sunday Times* seemed to awaken no answering delight.

"Since we've met, Mr Connolly, there is just one thing. I've been asked to ask you: whether, in your review for next Sunday, you're absolutely wedded to calling Galsworthy anal-erotic?"

And then I saw, for the first of thousands of times—and every time an exhilaration of the spirit—that sudden gleam of enchanted mischief with which Cyril responded to the absurd. I was enveloped in a wave of good humour. The wide, flat face cracked into a wolfish grin, and the grating giggle which I soon came to know and wait for so happily cut through the encircling twitter.

"Won't it do?"

"Well, I think it will, but of course I don't expect the word 'erotic' has been used very often in the *Sunday Times*, and I'm pretty sure the word 'anal' has never appeared at all."

"There's always a first time."

BY THE TIME he had been appearing weekly for a year or so, the sneers began. Some came from other literary journalists who all too plainly envied him; some came from academics who shrank from the relish of Cyril's response to so much; and still more from his proper practice of relating, in thousands of unforced asides, literature to life. In England the stereotyped jeers, save from one untiring little jackal, died away in due time. But across the Atlantic (I noted without surprise) they were to be repeated at the time of his death, often in a form which made it clear that those making them had no very close acquaintance, to put it mildly, with his writing. We, of course, cared not a jot for these glum disparagements. He did, a little; and tended, if a cut had to be made, to try to remove anything amusing, in case it should give ammunition to those jealous puritans only too eager to dismiss him as a *flâneur*. He was sometimes distressed, too, when a fleeting expression of fatigue was seized upon as evidence of his shame at ending his days as a weekly reviewer. No doubt he did at times regret that he had turned out not to be a great creative writer, but rather a man whose great gift it was to illuminate life and letters for other people through delightful written conversation—which, I shall claim, contained more *aperçus* in a month than those who comforted themselves by sneering at him will arrive at in a lifetime.

HE MAY AS WELL speak for himself:

> "I suppose what every journalist asks for is appreciation and security, and newspapers which provide both can be counted on the fingers of one toe. 'In our profession,' Desmond once said to me, 'we go on till we drop or till we are dropped,' and I am confident that my funeral, should it fall on a Tuesday, will be remarkable for a hand holding an article thrusting itself out of the coffin.
>
> "An office is an extraordinary place to grow old in . . . fearful changes and catastrophes may have taken place in our private lives, death's make-up man pencil more wrinkles on our brow or sprinkle our heads with dusting powder. Wives leave us, friends forsake us, children come and go but the rooms on the fifth floor [of the *Sunday Times* building] still bulge with new books, resound with jokes and greetings. . . . It is like swimming underwater in a mistral. Outside, on the surface, it may be ice-cold, the waves buffet and clatter round one's head; submerge a foot or two and we enter an immense radiant tranquillity. . . .
>
> "There are very few jobs like mine: I wish there were more—it keeps me still learning; it forces me to be just (so much harder than being merciful), it keeps me humble, for there is nothing I write that might not be used to light a fire a few hours later; when better writers are neglected I am groomed and cossetted; I love books, I am paid to read them; when people commiserate with me on my weekly grind I thank them but I know that without it the duns would long have been picking my bones. . . . My life on the *Sunday Times* has rushed by in a happy blur—a golden shower of books and proofs and telephone calls—endless trouble, infinite patience, occasional spats but in all these twenty years of close collaboration never a disagreement still less a quarrel. Not generally considered a happy man, I have here found happiness. . . ."

I hope I shall be excused for quoting that passage from *The Pearl of Days* at length. I am quite sure that Cyril meant every word of it; and whatever his detractors may strip away from him, that happiness they can never touch, though the knowledge of its mere existence will no doubt sharpen their scorn.

Of course he sometimes felt a Sisyphus on the hill of literature; of course he sometimes wrote against the grain, with an effort or with ill-concealed impatience; of course, at least in the first years, he often wrote under considerable personal stress. None of that affects the truth of the passage quoted above—which is also a source of considerable pleasure to those of us who were, so to speak, on the receiving end. Nobody will be surprised to hear that Cyril Connolly was in some ways a demanding colleague. Quite often the office resounded not with jokes and greetings but with cries of rage and bafflement; sometimes the atmosphere thickened with sulks; but all that was no more than the passing of catspaws on a steady sunlit tide.

"Wives leave us, friends forsake us . . ."—much indeed happened to Cyril during his years with

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the *Sunday Times*. Early on, in particular, his personal life led him a pretty dance, and us with him. Changing houses was the least of it. At first, in his flight from London, he lived in an almost absurdly picturesque thatched cottage in a fairly remote part of Kent. Great black plumes and cobwebs marked his ill-attended oil lamps; guinea-fowl cacchinated in the garden, and one of the frightful pets to which he was then addicted terrorised visitors—a rat-like, saw-toothed creature called a coati. This was later, but briefly, replaced; witness a letter from our office to Harrods' pet store:

> DEAR SIR:—You have had a word with Mr Cyril Connolly about the ring-tailed lemur in your pet store. This is to tell you that the *Sunday Times* wishes to purchase it on behalf of Mr Connolly.

Well, Wirra, the *Sunday Times* lemur, had his hour in an article entitled "Living with Lemurs"—and was then briskly resold to Harrods. In time, Oak Cottage (as that picture-postcard dwelling was called) gave way to a rather more elegant farmhouse-manor at Firle, further west under the flanks of the South Downs. When restiveness next set in, lunges were made in the direction of the newly-discovered Isle of Wight. Heavens, mimosa grows there—the best of both worlds—England's green and pleasant land touched with the exoticism of the Côte d'Azur! Luckily for us in the office, nothing came of this. Instead, Cyril, by now married again and—yes, the adjective is tired but it is true—a proud father, settled improbably but agreeably into a large, light Victorian villa at Eastbourne, placating unprepossessing but doubtless rare plants in a small conservatory off his large and cluttered study, and once again becoming a father. On a glorious summer day he roamed his garden, among his friends and colleagues, while Matthew the infant crown prince, just christened, surveyed the scene impassively from his nurse's arms; flanked by Deirdre his wife and Cressida his sprightly daughter, Cyril beamed with a touching, simple pleasure. All this, I hope it is clear, was in no way irrelevant to Connolly the book reviewer. His reviews enlarged their range of human reference; his conversation took on an extra dimension as he dilated on the change of perspective involved in searching no longer for hotels which had the finest wine-lists but for those which had the best sand-pits or children's swimming-pools. Occasionally, too, news of a more alarming sort would divert our careful consultations over the correctness of a quotation or the necessity of identifying, rather than merely alluding to, some very minor Symbolist poet: the desperate measures required, for example, to cope with a Central European *au pair* girl whose mental equilibrium proved negligible, and whose bizarre behaviour Cyril would mime, vocally and physically, with purgative zest; or the more taxing demands of a real family life, which evidently meant more to him than the public image of an impatient, rootless aesthete would suggest.

EVEN IN THE LATER, ENRICHED YEARS Cyril was no stay-at-home; back in the 1950s, when his private life was in some disarray, his wanderings imposed no slight strain upon communications. The books we sent almost always, it is true, reached him; and the articles he wrote almost always reached us, though not without alarm and despondency on both sides, to say nothing of the collaboration of a weird array of friends and acquaintances pressed into service along with railway guards, airline stewardesses—anyone who appeared to be going in more or less the right direction. His covering letters and postcards provide a running commentary:

> "Not très brilliant I'm afraid—it is an enormously boring book, no spark, and I have had to read it all with one eye—styes, face-ache, sinus. Frost on the new nectarines. Dégoût. Misère."

> "Petrified with fear of non-arrival of piece or that it is a v bad one. Trouble is it is not so good a book as it is long. . . . I have to hurry back as Cressida has measles and I must guard the nest so that D can go to her brother's wedding where Cressida was to have been a bridesmaid. . . ."

That one came from Spain, and so did this one:

> "Rather long but I hope legible. I am sorry for the French quotations. Vet them carefully for accents please, in proof. . . . It is warm and sunny by day, very windy, cold at night, fresh tangerine water ices, avocados from the garden (not *filched* by me and never were—see Journey to Java) [a recent book by Harold Nicolson]—shall I sue the old fart? and ripe custard apples. No more cheques for horrible meals in restaurants or telephones or being telephoned to —peace and quiet. P.S. An excellent *working* climate!"

From Syracuse:

> "The homeward leg of this marvellous trip starts tomorrow. . . . Back at Bushey by Wednesday night probably, so back in the paper by June 10. Is the new Powell available yet?"

A telegram touched all hearts as we basked in the glories of the Gray's Inn Road and grappled with our wandering boy:

> PLEASE EXPRESS ONE MORE BOOK C/O AUDEN FORIO ISCHIA AND ALLOW ME ONE MORE WEEK OF SUNSWIM WIRE IF INCONVENIENT LOVE TO ALL CYRIL QUISISANA CAPRI

Sometimes all thoughts of reviewing were crowded out. Here comes word from Rhodes, where Cyril was cruising on a yacht chartered by an "eccentric collector":

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"There are nine of us representing 5 nationalities of which one, thank heavens, Mme Claudel, is Greek. We went to Chios, Samos, Ephesus (with great trouble, in a caique), Patmos, Kalymnos and Cos. Cos has a wonderful beach and some excellent ruins, Patmos very spectacular, Turkey morose and asiatic (camels etc), Rhodes rather spoilt. A French doctor photographing the Acropolis of Lindos here the day before yesterday took a step backwards to focus the temple and fell back into space, a thousand feet or so. We arrived just afterwards—it is being a delicious life except for diarrhoea and clichés."

A postcard showing an African village in the jungle was posted in Spain, no doubt by some press-ganged fellow-traveller:

"An opinion poll here revealed: 60% prefer Felix Aprahamian to any other critic—101% think Cyril Connolly 'trop fuddy-duddy'—all agree that a *Junior Sunday Times* would sell well in the bush. Back in about a week. Many thanks for a lovely proof-read. The S.T. in Dakar costs eleven shillings. 11/-! Love to all."

Proof-reading did not always call for thanks:

"Who was responsible for inserting that blood-curling grammatical howler into the 1st sentence of my review? 'Two facts . . . is'—as you know I wrote it differently, without a verb and the thought of what people must think of such carelessness quite ruined all my pleasure in what I felt was a good piece."

In fact he did not write it differently, but we did not spot the error, I can't think why, since sorting out Cyril's grammar and punctuation was a normal hazard of our job. Sometimes mishaps occurred which could not possibly be blamed on us. A yelp of dismay from Munich:

"This is appalling. I can't understand it as I posted a review (very favourable on the whole) of the Canary Islands on Monday Aug 3rd—that is to say I gave it to the proprietress of the Hotel Reine Jeanne at La Narbelle after asking her all about mails etc and I watched the Postman call at 2 o'clock and take the letters. It seemed certain for London delivery on Wednesday. The Postal strike did not begin till the following Thursday and I can't see how it could not have got to you by then unless (1) she still has it, (2) she forgot to stamp it and it went to some French 'enfer'. It was a good review as no one could easily do on such a subject and I have forgotten every word of it, have no copy, and gave the book away to some English in Saint Tropez who wanted to go there. Je suis désolé—address was perfect this time. I got Fraser's book and will do it next. Have also Pound's translations at a pinch. Will be back last week in August. Been to 4 Wagners, 3 Mozart, 2 concerts, 2 musical dramas, very fat, very hot, love to all."

Cyril, more perhaps than most, could not last long without reassurance:

"Thank you for your telegrams—at last it is getting almost cool enough to write a letter. Your air-tickets were delightful and saved me a poisonous hot journey. I hope you got my second article from Greece all right, it was express air-mailed from Piraeus Harbour post office on July 14. I thought No. 1 read quite nicely and I was so very pleased you liked it and said so, as though one part of me thought it was good the other part was horrified and as I have always persecution mania abroad (l'absent a toujours tort) it was most consoling to know thare were some who still remembered me. I was asked to the Buckingham Palace garden party for that day (15th) and felt quite *out* of everything! This fellow Evelyn Waugh seems a dangerous rival —is he reviewing every week?"

Sometimes the reassurance took a cheerfully materialistic turn:

"Am still too poor to come to London but Help is on its way. Time has at last taken my portrait of E.W. and

HAS AIRMAILED ME A THOUSAND BUCKS
HAS AIRMAILED ME A THOUSAND BUCKS
HAS AIRMAILED
ME

a thousand bucks.
Oh there's money in my kerchief
and there's money in my snood
And where'er I tread there's money
and that money's ALLWHERES good
There's money in my armpits and
There's money in my ears
For I am made o' money
And it's ALL FOR ME
my dears
Simeon Stylites"

SUCH OUTBURSTS OF HIGH SPIRITS were frequent, and by no means always inspired by windfalls:

"I will come in and correct this tomorrow. It is a difficult book to do and one would need more space to discuss the theory and I have already taken too much. Professor Woltereck's ultimate statement, which I wish I had space to quote:

> Life is a jump-like intensification of not-life. Dying is a jump-like relapse into this prior form of reality.

So there's nothing to be frightened of! It's just a little jump, see! Shut your eyes! You can have pine, oak, or deal. Ordeal—must have been my sub-conscious. . . . Books that would interest me—Hitler's Table Talk, Lillian Ross's Picture (Gollancz), Cousteau's book on underwater fishing."

Question a phrase, and one might well get back a merry *boutade*:

". . . 'To pleasure'. I only meant I thought the use of this archaic word for 'to make love' rather vulgar and whimsical. 'Did you pleasure my aunt at the party?' 'No, I was too busy yarding your sister'. 'You swived her too? You seem to have an inclination to my family.' 'Those rum cocktails—she's got a jut with her bum that would soften an anchorite.' 'May I suggest you stick to lime-juice in future?' 'As long as it's Rose's.' 'Sir, your servant.' They toast. 'Your servant, Sir.'

From far and wide the letters came, the headings on the writing-paper rarely having any connection with the place where the letter was written: From Malaga on paper from the *Grand Hotel Eastbourne*, from Rhodes on paper from the *Hotel de l'Ecu, Genève*, from Kalamata in the

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Peloponnese on paper from the *Hotel Nazionale, Rome*, from Geneva on paper headed *Lismore Castle, Co. Waterford*, from Munich on paper from the *Goldene Hirsche* in Salzburg, from Salzburg on paper from (where else?) the *Vier Jahreszeiten* in Munich.

WHEN HE WAS ABROAD we sent him mostly what we hoped would spring his fancy, and sometimes what we thought he owed it to our readers to review. But when he was at home he came into the office every Wednesday afternoon to correct his proof and look at the available books. By and large the books selected themselves in the course of general conversation and a potter along the shelves. It was of course possible for us to give that general conversation a turn which would indicate a preference, and the trick usually worked. Usually, but not always. One day Cyril was toying with some dreary blown-up Ph.D. thesis about, I think, Benjamin Constant; anxious to get him off it, I introduced the word *Angst* into the chat, and then (not, it may be, without a touch of malice) drew his attention to a book with, I suggested, a promising title—*The Outsider*. Come to that, the contents looked promising, too; but he would have none of it, and went off with Constant. Two days later he telephoned to say that the book was really too boring for words. What was that other one I was talking about? *The Outsider*? "Yes, that's right. Who's it by?" "Colin Wilson." "Who's he?" "Don't know. It says he sleeps in a sleeping-bag on Hampstead Heath." "Oh God. Well, it can't be duller than the one I've got." So off it went. Reading it, Cyril was suddenly seized by excited enthusiasm. So was Philip Toynbee, who reviewed it on the same Sunday in *The Observer*. The result was instant fame for poor Colin Wilson, who has borne up pretty well under the avalanche of modish attention which was first lavished upon him and then withdrawn. I suppose his subject, and his reading round it, must have prepared him pretty well for the *beau monde's* capricious treatment, enabling him to ride out the storm despite the additional hazards of good looks and great personal charm.

IF I WERE TO LIST HERE the range of subjects upon which Cyril talked to us, his readers, on Sunday after Sunday, I should fill every page of this issue of ENCOUNTER. The classical world, anything French, Pound, Eliot, Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway—all these caused, at least until the last few years, an instant gleam to flicker in the sometimes lacklustre eye which surveyed the shelves of forthcoming books. Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Auden, too—and of course Anthony Powell: he had been greatly looking forward to writing at some length about the whole twelve volumes of *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Gardens, furniture, wild life, psychology—almost anything, once he had set his mind to it, would spark him off into a monologue of, obviously, varying quality; varying article by article, varying from paragraph to paragraph within a single article. All being well, his piece would arrive at teatime on Tuesday afternoon, having been written in the morning—more often than not on that purloined hotel writing paper, and virtually always on small sheets of whatever provenance. Starting at the very top of the sheet, the lines, in his roundly crumbled hand, were as close together as he could get them, and extended practically from edge to edge, with hardly any margin. Nor did he bother too much with punctuation, using dashes for the most part, and very little indication of when he intended a capital letter. At first, twenty-three years ago, I was appalled to find myself compelled to make some adjustments to his prose. One day we left the office together, took a bus (a *bus*? is that possible?) to Cambridge Circus, and walked down to Charing Cross, pausing in several of the alleys harbouring second-hand bookshops. He seemed in genial mood, so I timorously broached the matter of punctuation. "Oh, that's quite all right. I much prefer yours." Encouraged by this sign of confidence, I went too far, and asked him how the book he was then supposed to be writing (as opposed to all the other books he was subsequently supposed to be writing) was coming along?

"Stuck."

The sun had gone in. The confidence was withdrawn. In gloomy silence he disappeared into Charing Cross station, taking his train back to the incongruous thatched cottage.

In general, though he might be unsettled and distrait if something was bothering him in the outside world, he was gloomy, sulky and rude only if deeply dissatisfied with himself, and more particularly with his current article. Then we could do nothing right. We might at his behest bid our messengers ride forth to White's Club or an assortment of hotels in Belgravia, we might offer him tea (taken without milk and never pursued beyond two sips) and the most comfortable chair we could find. Our secretaries might make telephone calls all over the place; but to no purpose. Disgruntlement sprang from every pore like quills upon the fretful porpentine. Watch out, we signalled wildly to each other, and waited for the storm-clouds to pass—which they always did. They were in any case latterly few and far between, though twenty years ago the uncertain glory of an April day was as nothing to Cyril,

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presumably determined to prove to himself and anyone else who might be interested that he was no mere wage-slave. Sometimes it was necessary to be a little rude in return. One day, I remember, he sat glowering over his proof. Suddenly his right arm shot out in my direction. "*Larousse!*" he barked. "Over there, Cyril, on the shelf of reference books," I heard myself saying, without quite believing that I'd managed it until I saw him stand up, go across the room and pick the volume out. But the more he came to realise that, in the literary department at least, he was not only honoured as a valuable property but welcomed with affection, the less exigent he became.

UNLIKE SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES on the *Sunday Times* and elsewhere, who turn their offices into regular whore's parlours of flashy lighting and Habitat-Hilton furniture, I prefer our rooms—for the sake of the company and the stimulus I share them with my colleagues and our secretaries—to be rather tattily operational; I am in no danger of confusing my office with my home. There we sit, at a miscellany of ill-matched desks and chairs, tin shelves bulging with books which stare at us reproachfully like puppies in a dog's home, as they wait to be selected for review; lists of future reviews, the music critic's plans, publishers' telephone numbers and so on are stuck up here and there, a strikingly ugly but clearly legible calendar dominating all. At some point on Wednesday morning galley-proofs of Cyril's article for the following Sunday will have come up from the composing room. They are set in sections, by different compositors; some are faultless, some—despite our sub-editing and laborious typing from his manuscript—are gibberish. At times, the gibberish seems to have sprung straight from Cyril's pen and defied our efforts to sort it out.[1]

Then, in the middle of the afternoon, he would appear in our open door. As the years went by he was rather more nattily dressed in suits which seemed by their cut and bold stripes to salute the late 1920s. He also favoured heavy overcoats and rather comical hats with the brims turned up all round. He looked to each of us in turn, ready to smile, but even to the end a little on guard in case a smile was not called for. Then those jokes and greetings flowed. And Cyril's greetings were as kindly given to our secretaries as to ourselves. Any special occasion in their lives was marked by him in some way; nor were they forgotten when the picture postcards fluttered in from his travels. Off he would go to a desk, accepting with equal grace his galley proofs and instructions as to the number of lines he was to cut. He was always punctilious in letting us know in advance if he felt he really needed more space than usual; and more often than not had to be restrained from cutting more than we wished. Sucking his pen and jabbing at the disgusting coarse paper he would amend and delete. Then, the galley-proof trailing from his hand like a dejected pennant from the yard-arm of some battle-scarred man-of-war, he would shuffle towards us, looking hopefully from one to the other to see which of us was going to undertake the tutorial. Whichever it was he accepted comments, suggestions, and reproaches with brisk matter-of-factness, and visibly warmed to a spontaneous compliment. That done, and time permitting, the talk became general. Often we would question him about people he knew, and usually their names would set him off on one of those celebrated cadenzas which, beginning with a crisp statement of (let us hope) fact, developed effortlessly into an emphatic imitation and so spiralled up into fantasy, slander piled on slander, a grain of truth expanded into a ballooning moon of fantasy, his thick body ducking and swinging, his rubber face creased with laughter, assuming identity after identity while remaining ever his own. The laughter, it seems to me in retrospect, was happy laughter, not malicious though his tales were often so, but *gamin*-gleeful, innocent.

AS HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY approached we considered what best to do by way of marking the occasion. A present? Of course—a painting of his choice, which turned out to be a Venetian scene by Patrick Prockter. But perhaps a lunch? Certainly—with thirty or so guests, also of his own choice except a few of us from the *Sunday Times* (once again including, as Cyril was anxious to make sure we had included, our secretaries). But the place to be our choice, because the Deputy Editor, Frank Giles had an idea. We would not tell Cyril, we would pick him and Deirdre up on the day and sweep them off to an unknown destination. We even considered blindfolding them. "For Your Eyes Only", he wrote on his proposed list of guests—a friendly salute to the shade of his old friend Ian Fleming, who got him on to the paper in the first place. Letters went out; acceptances poured in. The numbers edged up a little until they could expand no more. The food and drink were ordered—by me, with trepidation at the thought of such gourmet guests. It was time to do the *place à table*. Heavens, what gaffes might one not commit!

[1] Not, let me quickly interject for the benefit of those who occasionally complained that Cyril's pieces were now and again a mite disconnected, that we ever tried to turn them into smoothly-flowing rivers of neatly-proportioned prose, like icing-sugar squeezed from a tube upon our rich, fruity pages. That would not have been Cyril, that would not have been him at all. A certain water-beetle darting was an essential element in his vitality.

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But Cyril came to the rescue, with a series of neatly scurrilous comments ("Burn before reading") indicating which of his old friends must on no acount be placed next to, or for preference even near, some of the others. The day approached:

> "We are both so excited that we can talk of nothing else but the Venue—Deirdre thinks it is either at 49 Bedford Square, 25 Sussex Gardens—converted for the occasion—or 10 Downing Street—I argue for some little-known but glamorous City hall—or some haunt of ancient peace like the former Vorticist Room of the White Tower. As long as it's not The Observer!"

The day arrived. Perfect September weather, too good to be true. I went down in a big office car to the hotel in Belgravia. Cyril and Deirdre had arrived, though not without anxieties en route. First he gave me a signed copy of *The Evening Colonnade*, then we got into the car. "Now", said Cyril, clutching Deirdre's hand, "let's guess." Grosvenor Gardens, and turn north. "The Dorchester?" said Cyril in tones clearly hoping for the answer No. Hyde Park Corner, and the Dorchester soon left behind. Turn out of the Park across Park Lane into Upper Brook Street. "Claridges?" Turn left before we got near Claridges. "It can't be the Royal Society of Literature, anyway", said the future Companion of that body with evident relief. Up Gloucester Place. A quivering silence fell. I sensed that a wild idea had entered their heads. The St John's Wood roundabout, turn right past the façade of the church. Cyril's face is glowing with a great beam which almost quenches the blazing sun. "It is, it is, it must be", he and Deirdre cried in disjointed chorus. "The Zoo, the Zoo!"

Frank Giles's idea, blessed by the weather and, as it turned out, by fine food and wine and enchanting service, proved all that Cyril could have wished. First to arrive, he greeted his friends amid the blaze of September roses, champagne glittering in his hand. Inside, the meal passed in a euphoric babble. We drank Cyril's health. Though long since told he need not, he made a delicious speech and even, visibly, enjoyed that. Then as in a dream, the company moved out in little groups to the small mammal house, where the guest of honour was able to gaze fondly upon all those sniffy creatures—the potto, and the like—who had once so delighted him, before he discovered the rewards of real human children, for all the problems they gave rise to. Wider still and wider the party wandered. Some, it was rumoured, were at closing time still in the Aquarium, swaying gently, beaming foolishly, mouthing happily back at the fish that pursed their lips through the glass at the strange intruders on their pale green world.

> "Just a word to say how *blissfully* happy I was at the party. The excitement of the Venue, the radiant sunshine, trees and rustic seats with champagne and all my favourite people except Stephen, Maurice Bowra and Elizabeth Bowen. . . ."

AND NOW, FOR US at the paper, the tale is almost told. Bronchitis apart, Cyril's health had always appeared pretty good. But in the months that followed, though he seemed as cheerful as usual on those Wednesday afternoons, were not his clothes hanging a little more loosely upon him? One day Raymond Mortimer came in; also usually cheerful, he was this time fretful. "Have you seen Cyril lately? Don't you think he's looking awfully ill?" His articles arrived less punctually than they had done—but only because of the ever-increasing incompetence of British Rail, to which, at vast expense to himself, Cyril habitually entrusted his copy. Little did we know that he was writing under ever-increasing difficulties, overtaken by cataract and angina, sometimes, peering with one good eye, gasping as he pushed the pen over the paper. I am sure it was not fear that made him keep going; rather that weekly article had become, I think, an old familiar friend from whom he was loth to be parted; he really cannot possibly have been afraid that we should, in Desmond's phrase, drop him. After his cataract operation he seemed almost desperate to start again, and we were almost as anxious that he should not, until his doctors should say unequivocally that all was well. That they never could. He did try to start again, down in the South of France hoping to recuperate; and the book he could not manage was the autobiography of one of his oldest friends, Kenneth Clark. Distraught messages came from the Midi; urgent instructions to rest went back from the Gray's Inn Road. . . .

Brought home at last for a long, sad wait for death, Cyril had moved far beyond the waiting books in the tin shelves of our grubby office, even beyond the jokes and greetings. Yet his weekly preoccupation with one or other of them over all those years was no disgrace. Through them and his writing about them he lived a rich life, even the regrets a source of nourishment. He wished to be buried in an English country churchyard, and he was. In the wild gray November morning, standing on the steep grassy bank sloping down from the little church to the grave, wreaths a fanfare of colour by the quiet hedge, the last leaves flying from the lashing treetops, I couldn't but hope that the peace of the valley beneath the storm echoed something essential, apart from his belated and bountiful family life, to the last two decades of Cyril's life. Surely he did find happiness, and to hell with masterpieces. And then it was closing time in the Old Curiosity Shop.

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LETTERS

"Amerenglish"

THAT PATRICK BROGAN is a caution! I just about bust a gut laughing at his comments on Amerenglish. Imagine chalking up to Yankee ingenuity such neologisms as "to articulate" (which, according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, dates from 1691), or "to perceive" (originally Middle English), or "to hone" (1788), or "to determine" (Middle English), or "supportive" (1593) or "dismissive" (1645). Or crediting us with the verbs "to outstand" and "to insee" because we use the adjectives "outstanding" (1570, or 1830 in the sense which he intends) and "insightful" ("insight" dates from 1491). And then to add mournfully that "most of [these usages] have already reached England." Well, really!

As some rustic countryman of mine might say, "Doe you not perceive the jest?"

PAUL L. ROBERTSON

The Johns Hopkins University,
Bologna Center

PAUL L. ROBERTSON'S articulation of the dates in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is not supportive of his perception of Amerenglish. I'm regretfully dismissive of his finely-honed letter because I can't determine whether its thrust is truly insightful or merely pedantic.

In the meantime, I'm sorry that I just about busted his gut. Hopefully, he is better at this moment in time.

PATRICK BROGAN

Washington, D.C.

Quinton & the Frankfurt School

YOUR ARTICLE by Mr Anthony Quinton (October 1974) shows that the "Frankfurt School" can still provoke discussion, if not in Germany at least abroad. Although Mr Quinton tries hard to give as objective a picture as possible of these undogmatic Marxists, he himself is such a faithful adherent to prevalent scientific ideals that in the end he takes dialectical theory for "rhetorical guff." Apart from this rather crude bias, there are other misleading assumptions which I would like to discuss more in detail in order to broaden the knowledge about concrete events.

It is not right to say that the "Frankfurt School" "stemmed from Lukàcs." In the 1920s there was a general neo-Marxist movement to which Lukàcs and Horkheimer belonged among others (*e.g.* Karl Korsch), and among these undogmatic Marxists political differences developed from the beginning.

Max Horkheimer, the leading figure of the "Institut für Sozialforschung" and editor of the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, very much determined the political line of those institutions. His foremost aim was to discover the reasons for the irrationality and destructiveness still pervading the rationally organised Industrial Societies. In pursuit of this aim Horkheimer sought close collaboration with psychoanalysts, *e.g.* Erich Fromm.

When the Nazis came to power and the members of the "Institut für Sozialforschung" were forced to emigrate, this aim was stressed even more since Fascism made clear how disastrously industrial progress could be linked with regressive social forces. In an article on the "Autoritärer Staat" (1942) Horkheimer extended the experiences obtained from the rise of Fascism to all industrialised countries, including the Soviet Union.

Their work was partly continued when they returned to Frankfurt after the War. Several follow-up studies of *The Authoritarian Personality*, which had been published in the USA (1950), were undertaken. At the same time Adorno pursued the relations between social conditions and the development and techniques of art.

In the middle of the 1950s Horkheimer retired from University life. Dr Jürgen Habermas, a former assistant at the "Institut für Sozialforschung", became the official heir to the "Frankfurt School" a few years later. Like Horkheimer he gave lectures on both sociology and philosophy. Unofficially there had been grave differences between the two, since Horkheimer had not accepted Habermas' inaugural dissertation on *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962), and Habermas had to go to Marburg to be "habilitated."

The average student of sociology at Frankfurt was unaware of the theoretical differences between the "older" Frankfurt School, represented by Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno and Alfred Schmidt, and the "younger" Frankfurt School as represented by Habermas and his adherents. Moreover, Adorno disliked having this latent conflict made public. Even during the anti-authoritarian movement, when some of the students began to understand the reasons for the conflict, he tried to harmonise the situation.

Before the students' movement lapsed into irrational behaviour and rigid political organisation, it was very much influenced by the "Critical Theory" as formulated by Horkheimer. Members of the "Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund" (*SDS*), who were the intellectual leaders of the movement, were particularly influenced by the "Critical Theory."

MR QUINTON IS NOT RIGHT when he speaks of Habermas's "thoughtful reaction to the anarchic extravagances of the student rebellion of the late 1960s." Habermas reacted in a highly emotional way towards the students, and his openly expressed disapproval of most forms of spontaneity should not be taken as evidence of thoughtfulness. Adorno's position on this issue was extremely ambivalent.

Interestingly enough, Habermas's attacks on the anti-authoritarian movement enjoyed the most welcome reception from people who were and still are enemies of "Critical Theory." Thus Habermas himself promoted a strangely "double-blind" situation, which creates a lot of confusion. Due to the paralysing effects of this situation hardly any discussion about the development of the "Critical

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Theory" has yet taken place. On the whole, the teaching of the "younger" Frankfurt School claims to present a dialectical theory, but in its essence is something different. Apart from a few essays no substantial critique on the "younger" Frankfurt School has yet been undertaken.

HEIDE BERNDT

Frankfurt-am-Main

HEIDE BERNDT SAYS that I take dialectical theory to be "rhetorical guff". What I actually said was that its adherents' claim that contemporary society is "uniquely and hyperbolically dominative" merits that description.

I am sure she is correct in saying that the relation of the Frankfurt School to Lukács is one of broad affinity rather than of direct derivation and that the relations between the old leader Horkheimer and the new leader Habermas have been imperfectly amiable, although that is far from disproving discipleship.

My use of the word "thoughtful" to describe Professor Habermas's reaction to the destructive extravagances of the German student movement of the 1960s was, no doubt, somewhat euphemistic. But, at any rate, he did not indulge the "New Left Fascism" with complacent glee in the manner of Herbert Marcuse.

ANTHONY QUINTON

New College,
Oxford

Morality & the Law

A Comment on S. R. Letwin's Essay—By LIONEL BLOCH

IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE of increasing social turbulence, practising lawyers who look above the drudgery of their daily tasks are often preoccupied with the relations between practical justice and ethical principles. In private law, one hears again and again aggrieved parties asking: Why is there no redress if I have a good moral case? When one advises a man who will not accept the restrictive practices of his trade union—or an author whose original research work is not protected by copyright legislation—or a husband who can only divorce his adulterous wife if he is prepared to give up his home and the care and control of his children—one begins to understand the practical limitations of our legal system. In public law, the divergence between morality and international polity is ever more disturbing. What is left of the rule of law when air-piracy and the murder of hostages go on week after week virtually unpunished? These crimes can only be committed successfully if the criminals have a reasonable chance of being ultimately harboured and protected by a sovereign state. We all know the states who act as accessories to terrorists; yet nobody, not even the states whose citizens were slain and whose planes were destroyed, are taking any steps against the offending countries....

In this atmosphere, it is important for those concerned with the interpretation and implementation of the law to take stock and return to the basic concepts of jurisprudence.

In this spirit I turned to Shirley Robin Letwin's essay [ENCOUNTER, November 1974] with particular interest. I share her view that "what is always at issue in any discussion about law is communal morality." It is precisely because I agree with this proposition that I venture to express some disagreement with the manner in which she chose to treat the subject. The no-man's-land between political philosophy and law is alluring and fertile but it is heavily mined—especially as one leaves the shores of abstraction and approaches the edges of legal precision. The conflict between individualism and communal morality is as old as recorded history; indeed, I would go as far as to say that the successful balancing by legislative process of individual interests against the impinging demands of communal morality is an essential condition of civilisation.

Mrs Letwin suggests that the whole subject has been clouded by a confusion about the true nature of modern individualism, and she attempts to elucidate it by the claim that everything will become rather clearer if one would only distinguish between two moral commitments intrinsic in the law: on one hand, "the commitment to the association regulated by the law"; on the other, "to ONE of the many patterns of civilisation compatible with this kind of association." The late Sir Ernest Gower would probably have rephrased this as: a measure of consent to the form of government under which we happen to live and some dedication to a way of life we like. It stands to reason that the stronger our desire to have a choice in following our personal inclinations, the keener will be our determination to uphold the political framework which affords and protects the widest pluralism. But it is both pretentious and inaccurate to elevate mere human inclinations into "commitments" and treat them as fundamental moral factors.

I don't think that many individualists today go as far as to commit themselves to "ONE of the many patterns of civilisation." Some may have a preference; but most of them drift from one pattern to another according to expediency or the whims of fate. They are, more often than not, simultaneously "committed" to several different patterns. To an individualist, "commitment to the association" usually means little more than lukewarm adherence and an occasional perfunctory gesture. But need we not consider also the non-individualist, who does not even bother to express this "commitment" sporadically? What place has the apathetic mass in this equation? To try to build up some general theory about law and morality on the vagaries of individualist "commitments" is therefore meaningless.

The difficulties of this attempt at clarifying the debate become evident when Mrs Letwin tries to

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substantiate her points with examples—imprudently taken from real life.

1. She endorses a distinction put forward by Professor Michael Oakeshott between Civil Association and Enterprise. I am not convinced that this high-sounding terminology is appropriate in a general discussion of this kind. Indeed, one cannot help wondering if Mrs Letwin's weakness for sociological terminology and the jargon of abstraction has not disturbed the substance of her particular case. Thus, we are informed that "in a civil association the law is designed not to impose any pattern of life on its members or to direct their activities, but to set conditions that will make it possible for them to associate and yet to pursue their private projects."

Is that so? What if a street-walker solicits for a passing association with a man? It is illegal. What if a householder wishes to rear pigs in his back garden?

"Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

Washington D.C.

WHAT OTHER THOUGHTS *should preoccupy one on the trip back from Berkeley, California? It is quite ten years since the stormy beginnings there of world-wide student revolt. Berkeley was the soil of the flower people who then transplanted themselves to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and withered on the vine. It spawned the cult of the four-letter word under the banner of the "Free Speech Movement", and it won its first victory over the hated academic enemy in the purge of University Chancellor Clark Kerr. Thousands danced, chanted, struck, dreamed of a brave new world. And where are they today? On the plane back East I read an inquiry by the editors of* "Business Week", *who should know, and the conclusion was that most, if not all, are today gainfully employed. They have jobs in industry, and if they haven't been laid off in the current recession they are quite dutifully putting in their nine-to-five. But still, they do have special characteristics: they appear to be "more intelligent", and have "more style." A great many others have remained on the old battle-grounds of the campus, and constitute the new generation of university instructors searching for nice students to teach in a time of academic retrenchment.*

But perhaps too much attention has always been paid to the campus rebels who were so effectively noisy and visible. What of the "Negro Revolt", the radical forces of the so-called Black Panthers? Here, too, there is a deafening silence. Novelist-pamphleteer James Baldwin appears to have converted himself from revolution to reform, and the old stormy petrels seem so anachronistic as they operate over still waters. I spoke to one Black journalist who said, "Why did everybody constantly write about our Cult-Heroes of Violence, instead of paying attention to our engineers and executives and politicians who were beginning to make good? . . ." No, the era of Radical Chic is gone, and one suspects that the savage piece which Tom Wolfe wrote at the time about Leonard Bernstein's cocktail party for the Black Revolution may well go down as one of the polemical turning-points of current affairs. Fashionable moods are so transient.

SEVEN YEARS **have elapsed since the assassination of Martin Luther King (the killer is behind bars, but his paymasters have never been unearthed), and it could be that his political star was then waning. Malcolm X's message of blood and thunder was carried forward by Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael, and the later (if with more muted Marxian orthodoxy) by Angela Davis. Those were the days when** *The New York Review of Books* **was the central organ of the New Left, and it dutifully put formulae for Molotov Cocktails on its front-page and reprinted the rousing manifestos for the Brothers and Sisters of the Movement. Times change. The NYRB's review of Angela Davis' recent autobiography was something less than enthusiastic, and no tears are being shed for those martyrs of prison revolt, the "Soledad Brothers."**

It could be that only a mix of black and white could have sustained a radical New Left ideology. But the radical blacks made a special target of the white liberals, and it would have taken not merely idealism but a sick portion of masochism to accept every insulting attack with another confession of white middle-class guilt and yet another generous cheque. It was an uneasy, unhappy alliance for a few years, but it's all over now. The reaction I have heard from coast-to-coast was: "Well, if they didn't want us, then we were no longer obliged. . . ." The white liberal support—now along normal, conventional electoral lines—goes to black urban personalities who are qualified to do a job of effective work as a mayor or an educationist or a judge. It is they who get the votes, and the kudos when they prove successful. But who knows or cares who is still holding court in Algiers (or are they in jail, or have they been deported)?

PIONEERS *often get out-distanced. The Blacks can be said to have started the "Ethnic Revolution", but then it caught on elsewhere like wild-fire. Black may have been beautiful, but now the slogan is also (and I have seen the graffiti evidence)* "SLOVAK IS BEAUTIFUL!" *Every minority group—and "ethnics" has become a catchphrase to displace "beatniks"—is set on the glory road to fulfil its culture and heritage. The most powerful among them are perhaps*

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A particle of the civil association is bound to sue him for nuisance. What if a family wish to build a playroom at the side of their house infringing some building line? Nothing doing. One could go on.

In fact, the ability to pursue private projects is severely curtailed precisely because the law in a civil association does not only deal with the provision of an acceptable sovereign authority, but also with what Mrs Letwin calls "standards of civility." Far from enabling us to pursue our pet projects *and* to associate, we must make choices the whole time, for the area of conflict between preferences for living in a certain manner and being associated in a certain manner is unlimited.

To contrast this with the law applicable in the case of "enterprise" hardly illuminates the problem. Yes, there are obvious differences, but how significant are they? It is not exactly accurate to say that in an

——*The New Left Today*

the "Chicanos", or Spanish-speaking Americans, and they are now even succeeding in having Spanish accepted as the basic language of instruction in their neighbourhood schools. If "Black English" is to be taken seriously, what of the language of Cervantes? So has the ethnic consciousness expanded and crowded out what was once a Black monopoly of demands.

Can it then be that a kind of "cultural revolution" has displaced the longed-for revolutionary class struggle? The figures of American unemployment have been mounting from 7% to 10%, and so far as I can see there is no new outburst of proletarian militance, no developing consciousness along New Left lines which would open a perspective of Changing the System. They may all be Keynesians now, but not socialists. The miners of West Virginia went out on strike for more money, for a "bigger piece of the national cake"; and at the same time militantly campaigned against certain tendencies in the new school textbooks which were "corrupting" their children. Boston has been torn apart by the conflict between the Irish and the Blacks over bussing and integration, but where were the voices that could be expected to preach to them that they really had "common class interests"? Passionate things are in the saddle.

I ALSO READ THROUGH **a few recent numbers of** *Ramparts*, **once the muck-raking journal of those who had all the simple solutions; and there, lo and behold, was a moderate tone, cautious analysis, differentiated argumentation. Will wonders never cease? Men of violent action are becoming men of prudent thought. It is an altogether remarkable phenomenon, for how is it that the demonstration of the moral bankruptcy of the Nixon régime—and with it the discrediting of so many in the liberal-conservative Establishment—proved to be of so little profit to the Left? What a moment for Protest! Here is the proverbial "Crisis of Capitalism", with the excess profits of oil millionaires and the corruption of the ruling class—and yet one can only conclude that the crisis of the System is rather less severe than the crisis of the Left.**

Its main deficiency may well be an intellectual one: its failure to learn. The Bourbons of ideology go the royalists one better, for they forget everything and learn nothing. Consider the recent failure in New York. Senator Javits was destined for electoral retirement in a time when the swing is vast from Republican to Democrat. Anybody could have beaten him—except the McGovern-type ideological radical put up as the candidate, Ramsay Clark, who ran a million votes behind the ticket. There is also a painful emotional vacuum as no new loyalty or allegiance emerges to fill the empty ideological space. "The "Third World" is a tired, exhausted cause. The kids can put up posters of Che Guevara—but of King Feisal? and on Central Park West? . . . The youthful Jewish rebels, once so prominent in the radicalisation of the American youth, were quite prepared to be critical of a triumphant and apparently arrogant Israel; but they are not ready to preside over the threatened "liquidation of Zionism." Wherewith will the salt be salted, and the secular religion be given its note of prophetic determination, if the Mosaic remnant should withdraw? This is an important element in the split between left and left and the disintegration of militant confidence.

SO IT IS *that the flora and fauna of yesterday are hard to find on the American scene today. The flower people have had their day, and it turns out to have been a moment of horticultural, rather than political, history. "We are all weeds now," one sad Berkeley veteran told me, and he had once planted roses in the barrels of National Guardsmen's rifles in the famous People's Park confrontation. I could not help recalling what one sad surrealist told me once in Paris as he looked out at the French shop-windows and bill-boards, "They are all surrealists now. . . ." I was told of a prospering little agency in California which makes its money packaging advice on how ambitious little Groups can organise flourishing Communes.*

In the last analysis, it could be that the revolution which failed for the New Left was the vaunted "revolution of rising expectations." Everybody in America is brought up to count on "more", and more has tended to mean less: less idealism, less materialism. Expectations are sinking. The real struggle is to keep what you've got: your job, your present living standard. Who thinks of the Revolution of only a decade ago, "The Fire Next Time"? On my return to Washington I watched an orderly procession along Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. It was supposed to be a Protest March. A few policemen held it up quietly for a few minutes. The President in his black limousine was driving out to the Capitol.

François Bondy

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enterprise "as in a hospital or factory" the only criterion for a good rule is whether it "promotes the objectives of the enterprise." As it happens, the law in most advanced industrial countries has gone the other way these last 25 years or so. The various Safety regulations, Health provisions, and Factory Acts all put the well-being of the individual worker first, even if the result goes directly against the primary objective of the enterprise. The paramount concern for individual welfare has not only been imposed by society, but has also been initiated by large industrial concerns (*e.g.* Volvo in Sweden, where the workers have been taken off boring production lines and given diversified responsibilities, although this new system has slowed down production and increased costs).

If we take hospitals, one only has to visit a geriatric ward to see that the entire effort in such departments is centred on considerations which transcend the normal function of the "enterprise." Old people whose families lack accepted "standards of civility" are there burdening the workings of the institution—a glaring instance of charity prevailing over efficiency or other collective aims.

2. Mrs Letwin expresses reservations about the provisions of public orphanages for the issue of casual sexual associations—because "the civil association" would apparently adulterate its character by turning itself into a nursemaid as well as a rule maker! If this is adulteration, then "our civil association" in England is rotten to the core considering all the services which it already provides in addition to its legislative activities.

3. We are further told that "whether conduct is regarded as indecent or decent does not make it a proper subject for legislation." Can this be so? What about indecent exposure for instance? A few lines further along Mrs Letwin veers to the opposite view: ". . . any community of people who live together in harmony have come to agree on what is decent and indecent, reasonable or unreasonable, etc. This agreement will be reflected in all the laws whether about abortion or compensation for injury." Well, which one is it to be?

May I say finally that it is quite fortuitous that I happen to take issue with Mrs Letwin. It could have been with anyone with a penchant for fashionable idiom and the doubtful models of some well-known academics. These days when legal and ethical concepts are ravaged in the name of *raison d'état* and apostles of anarchy or autocracy undermine the traditional fabric of orderly living while the law-enforcement agencies look the other way one is not exactly haunted by the question whether morality is an integral part—or merely an occasional ingredient—in the idea of Law.

These interrelated notions may remain of constant academic interest—not so much because they open forever new avenues for reclassifying the obvious but rather because a proper understanding of their relevance and function could provide us with the kind of guidance which lately has been so conspicuously absent in the advanced parliamentary democracies.

LIONEL BLOCH

London

Gibney's "Japanese Language"

AS A WHOLE, Mr Frank Gibney's "Letter from Tokyo" is indeed a remarkably perceptive record of a Westerner's sincere struggle to challenge the formidable linguistic barrier. The struggle brought to mind the tremendous efforts with which my countrymen translated (into Japanese) without the aid of a single dictionary a Dutch medical book entitled *Anatomical Chart*. One of the translators left in his diary his impression at the time when he started the work; ". . . I was just overwhelmed with sheer astonishment, feeling like a captain launching his ship without steering into a vast ocean and having nothing to rely on. . . ."

Mr Gibney, however, seems to have steered his ship admirably, and to have gained a firm grasp on the Japanese language. I can only endorse him when he refers to the difficulties in communication between Westerners and Japanese stemming from both linguistic and social causes. I am also appreciative of the phenomena or episodes he mentioned; some amusing, some slightly embarrassing, from the Japanese point of view. They do not fail to illustrate the tremendous linguistic barrier which surely exists between us. Even I myself was astonished to be led to recall that the Japanese language is so rooted in homophones and that the words with the same pronunciation of *"senko"* are expressed with 21 different ideographs!

While I respect very much his assessment on the barrier, I cannot, however, go along with his rather pessimistic view on the further possibilities of narrowing the gap. He mentions foreigners' apathy in trying to learn Japanese on the one hand and our peoples' bad linguistic ability on the other.

> ". . . and Japanese do badly, on the whole, at English conversation. They are characteristically hypersensitive about making mistakes in public, calling undue attention to themselves, or committing themselves prematurely to a position which may be wrong. All three of these *national characteristics* [italics added] are deadly handicaps to anyone trying to learn a foreign language. . . ."

Here, in my view, the patient student of Japanese has gone too far. The linguistic barrier is a mutual one, caused by defects on both sides and an enduring lack of contact.

I recall that in the early stage of my stay in Western countries I felt awkward in speaking out publicly in the foreign language. I hesitated to do so partly because of my puzzlement with the usage of *"a"* or *"the"*, *"should"* or *"would"*, "two pieces of stone" or "two rocks" etc., all of which are unfamiliar concepts to us. The factor which really constrained me, however, was a feeling of psychological bewilderment. One felt like a provincial boy with a strong local dialect coming to a large city to find everybody talking very fast on topics with which he had rarely been concerned. The boy will surely speak little to avoid making any embarrassing mistake and may be blamed as being "hypersensitive." He may also talk about "his" villages, valleys, and meadows, sometimes finding it hard to follow the quickly changing topics of other people's conversation, which may be interpreted as

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Life & Letters Today

London

AGE-OLD WISDOM: Eric Partridge is at least six centuries out if he imagines the catch-phrase "If you can't be good, be careful" was coined during the First World War.

Salimbene, the Franciscan chronicler writing in the thirteenth century, reports that the phrase *(si non caste, tamen caute)* **was frequently used by Italian priests and attributed by them to St. Paul. Our own King Edward I in a letter to the abbot of Prémontré, complaining of the conduct of the canons of Talley Abbey in Wales, says that they neglected the apostolic precept, "If you can't be chaste, be careful", and dared to keep their mistresses openly and gave themselves up to drunkenness.**

SUNDAY TIMES

London

MEANINGS: *The Obfuscation Award can now be announced and some of the runners-up, but reports of other instances of official double-talk are still welcome.*

Some of the briefest examples had charm. British Rail were criticised for saying that trains arriving late had been "retimed", and the Turks for calling their invasion of Cyprus a "peace operation." Capt. J. Allan of Tunbridge Wells hit the right note with an extract from an interview on BBC. Asked whether people were worried about unemployment, the interviewee replied: "I don't think they are worried. It's more a case of being concerned about the future."

*Rita Palmer of "*The Economist*" nominates Caspar Weinberger, the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who described cuts of $43m in the social services as "advance downward adjustments." M. Whippman of Wimbledon remembers the South African Broadcasting System announcing: "It's not true that we have banned the Beatles. It's just that we don't play their records."*

Patrick Brogan from Washington points the finger at a letter in our columns from S. M. Koffler of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He wrote: "It is untrue to state that two resolutions passed by the last session of Unesco's General Conference 'deprive Israel of the benefits of belonging to that body. . . . The Conference voted to apply sanctions to Israel and withhold assistance in the fields of education, science and culture'."

Nearer home, Anthony Fletcher of Deptford sent a quotation from a report of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee. The chairman asked J. R. Madge, Under-Secretary of the Housing Directorate, whether it was still their target to clear slums and improve sub-standard housing within a decade.

Madge replied: "We always shy away from the word target if we can. . . . Without trying to split straws, I think it is fair to take this as a reasonable objective. 'Within a decade' was an order of magnitude, rather than saying 'Within ten years'."

Rose Elton, of Horsham, Sussex, sends this statement by the managing director of a bakery firm, who used guard dogs to eject 17 bakers who staged a sit-in at the bakery: "Five Alsatian dogs from a private security firm were brought in to impress on the men the seriousness of the situation, and in this they were most successful."

Also close to a prize was Alan Gibson, of Bristol, who quotes a memorandum by a senior BBC executive announcing that the switchboard was to be closed down on Saturday evenings "because of the very high non-utilization factor."

Honorary second prize goes to E. W. Andrews, of Lloyd's of London, with a newspaper report of a statement by the Post Office: "It was also pointed out that £725 million is not 'missing.' It is an actuarial deficiency representing a prospective excess of liabilities over assets which would have to be found to meet future pension obligations."

The winner is Ivan Cole, of Upton Pyne, Devon, who also nominates the Post Office, this time their Exeter branch. Cole wrote to them complaining of delays in his correspondence with Woking and, at their request, sent one of the offending envelopes. After several weeks he received this reply from the Head Postmaster: "After a thorough investigation, we are able to establish that the late arrival of your mail was due to delay in transit."

THE TIMES

Moscow

TRANSLATING YOGA: The Yoga system of exercises—which caught on in Russia about four years ago, and has spread without official approval mainly by the passing on by hand of typewritten translations of foreign yoga manuals—has now come in for censure. The official Soviet sports daily newspaper recently reported that a meeting of athletics officials had denounced Yoga for ideological reasons.

Yoga, declared *Sovietski Sport*, **"does nothing to promote the development of active working people and is based on an idealistic philosophy full of mysticism."**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Aberdeen

GUNSEL: *Larry Adler, in his book review, used the word "gunsel" to convey the meaning of a hired gunman or assassin. The only other time I've seen the word used was in Lilian Hellman's autobiography. There she claimed that Dashiell Hammett, exasperated by the meddling of an ignorant but meddlesome editor, used the word "gunsel" in an article with the hope that the editor would ascribe Mr Adler's meaning to it. So it proved—although, according to Miss Hellman, the true meaning of the word is catamite, or the object of a pederasts' sexual attentions. "Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary" gives no meaning for the word. Who, then, is right—Mr Adler or Miss Hellman? If the latter, Mr Adler's review has perhaps a greater comic value than he supposed or intended.*

THE SPECTATOR

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trying to call "undue attention" to himself. The boy may be clumsy in expressing himself and state something which may sound dogmatic or premature under the circumstances.

The real difficulty for Japanese comes from a lack of sense of unity with Westerners, which can only be enhanced through long-standing personal ties, hopefully through some common purpose. It is a very recent development, perhaps only in the last fifteen years, that increased numbers of Japanese stay or travel abroad and that Japan is visited by substantial numbers of Westerners other than occasional transients, tourists, or people on special assignments. I am sure the sense of unity should grow with the passage of time and with increased opportunities of mutual discourse.

I do not think both the linguistic and sociological gaps which Mr Gibney sees as separating our two cultures are fatal or eternal. And it is Mr Gibney himself who showed the most remarkable example in overcoming the barrier for one of the world's most complicated languages, undoubtedly through establishing time-tested personal friendships with the local people. I only hope that an increased number of Japanese will derive benefit from the opportunities now becoming available to try the same in the opposite direction.

REIICHI SHIMAMOTO

London

"Audenesque" & "Audenry"

WHEN I wrote "Audenesque for an Initiation" in the summer of 1933 I certainly believed that I had coined the word—though, of course, nobody can say whether other people elsewhere used it in conversation. "Arabesque" was the parallel word in my mind, which like "humoresque" can be a noun only (unlike "burlesque" which can also be adjective and verb). The poem was not, by me then, regarded as a "parody." There was no satirical intention directed against Auden. Rather, it was a completely serious poem using the style in which, with adolescent certainty and enthusiasm, I felt all good poems *had* to be written. I think, as Bernard Bergonzi suggests ("Auden & the Audenesque", February 1975), this feeling was common among young poets at that time.

The preferred adjective for verse that has Auden-like qualities is "audenary"—used for years by witty critics and reviewers.

GAVIN EWART

London

AUTHORS

Margaret Bhatty lives in India and is a teacher. Her first novel, *The Remaking of J. J. Massey*, will be published by Macmillan later this year. . . .

L. P. Elwell-Sutton is Reader in Persian in the University of Edinburgh and is the author of many books and articles on Persian history, literature, language and folk-lore. He has paid numerous extended visits to Iran since 1935 and recently made several appearances on Teheran television and radio. . . .

Michael Wharton, who is the "Peter Simple" columnist of the *Daily Telegraph*, contributed The Profile of Dr Heinz Kiosk in our April issue. The illustrations for "Rentacrowd" are by **ffolkes**. . . .

George Feaver is Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia and the author of *From Status to Contract: A Biography of Sir Henry Maine* (Longman, 1969). . . .

John Spurling is a playwright and critic. Two of his plays, *Macrune's Guevara* and *In the Heart of the British Museum*, are published by Calder & Boyars, who will shortly be bringing out a third, *Shades of Heathcliff*. He is co-author of *Beckett: A Study of His Plays* (Eyre Methuen). . . .

Anthony Thwaite's most recent volume of poems is *New Confessions* (Oxford University Press, 1974). . . .

Alastair Buchan is Professor of International Relations at Oxford University. He was for many years Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies in London and for two years Commandant of the Royal College of Defence Studies. He has been a frequent contributor to ENCOUNTER and wrote a much-discussed article in the January 1968 issue called "Questions about Viet Nam," with a follow-up in the May 1973, "Viet Nam: Reasons and Rationales."

John Lehmann's memoir of Cyril Connolly has been broadcast on BBC's Radio 3. . . .

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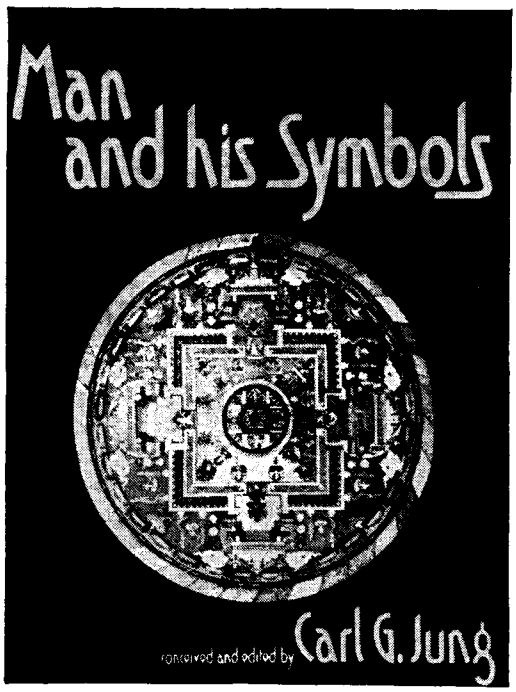
Man and his Symbols

conceived and edited by

Carl G. Jung



This April sees the first publication in the U.K. of a soft-cover edition of *Man and his Symbols*, for more than 10 years a bestseller in hardback, not only in the U.K., but also all over the world. Some three-quarters of a million copies have already been sold in eight different languages, including reprints of nearly 200,000 in 1974 alone.

Man and his Symbols is one of the most important works in the history of psychology. It represents Dr Jung's only attempt to explain to the non-specialist reader his revolutionary theories about the importance of symbolism, and particularly the symbolism of dreams. He himself planned and edited the book, and wrote the key introductory chapter — other sections were written by four of his closest associates. The book includes some 500 illustrations, in full colour and black-and-white, carefully selected to give unique visual expression to Dr Jung's ideas.

The soft-cover edition of *Man and his Symbols* will be published on April 17 at £2.95 net. But the hard-cover edition will still be available at £4.50 net.

* 320 pages, illustrated throughout in full colour and black-and-white.
ISBN 0 904 04124 7. **£2.95 net**

* Publication April 17

* Available from your bookshop or, in case of difficulty, from Jupiter Books, 167 Hermitage Road, London N4.

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